



Teachers' Training Department Bulletin No. 3.

# BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

*A Few Case-Studies*

BY

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TO  
PROF. PRAMATHANATH BANERJEE, M.A., B.L.,  
P.R.S., BARRISTER-AT-LAW,  
PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF POST-GRADUATE TEACHING IN ARTS  
AND  
VICE-CHANCELLOR, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY  
WITH THE  
AUTHOR'S GRATEFUL REGARD AND ESTEEM





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## FOREWORD

THE HON'BLE DR. S. P. MOOKERJEE, M.A., B.L.,  
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The problem of discipline in school is of complex and intricate nature. The presence of anti-social behaviour in children disturbs the peace of the school community and its effect is felt also in the wider society. It is therefore a problem of great practical importance to all those who are responsible for the proper education of children. Here as everywhere, only accurate and adequate knowledge can help us in formulating effective measures to cope with the problem.

There has been, however, very little scientific work in this country to understand the psychology of children who offend against school discipline. The investigations of Dr. J. Dasgupta of the Teachers' Training Department, Calcutta University, is an attempt and a right step, in this direction. The following pages incorporate some of the findings of his enquiry. I am confident guardians and teachers will find this book useful.





## PREFACE

A. N. BASU, M.A. (LONDON)

By school discipline we generally understand the observance of certain rules of conduct framed by the school authorities. Failure to comply with such rules is regarded mainly from the point of view of school administration; and aggressive measures are taken to cope with the problem with little attempt to gain an insight into its psychology. Only recently we have begun to realise the individual nature of the problem. Such a change in outlook has more and more shifted the emphasis from the breaches to the breakers of discipline, *i.e.*, from the conduct to the personality behind it.

Modern psychology insists on a teleological determinism in behaviour and the complexity of underlying motives inspiring any particular form of behaviour. It has been found that we are no longer in need of the hypothesis of "an innately depraved heart" to account for breaches of discipline and acts of delinquency. There may be other explanations which are not only theoretically more cogent and valid but also more helpful and reassuring from the point of view of educators. Social Psychology, *i.e.*, the psychology of inter-personal relationship, and depth psychology, *i.e.*, the psychology of unconscious motives lying buried in human nature provide us with such explanations which are at once more scientific and satisfactory. The present investigation, it will be seen, has also proved this fact.

Indiscipline is a matter affecting not only the individual child but also the school community to which he belongs. Children's observance of school rules is a good criterion for judging the extent of their adaptation to school-society and finally to the larger society outside the





school. Education aims at, among other things, wholesome social adjustment. Indiscipline and delinquency in schools are therefore in reality expression of social maladjustment and as such they are educational problems of great importance.

Dr. Dasgupta has studied the problem of indiscipline not only as a psychologist but also as an educationist. He approached the problem from the point of view of both social and depth psychology. He selected a number of school children and studied them intensively with special reference to some major problems of indiscipline. He has made a careful and scientific analysis of the causes underlying these problems and has reached certain important conclusions which will be of great value to all students of child psychology. But he has not been content with that. As an educationist he has also suggested how these cases of indiscipline are to be remedied and his suggestions will be found helpful not only by teachers but also by parents.





# BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

## INTRODUCTION

In March, 1944, Teachers' Training Department, Calcutta University, undertook an investigation into the problem of School Discipline and Mental Health of School Children. The following pages incorporate some of the findings of the enquiry. We have however added in our last chapter a genetic study of a two-year old which claims to possess some value as a psychological document.

Every breach of discipline by a pupil creates some difficulty on the way of smooth working of school administration. Now school administration is devoted in the first instance, to the purpose of scholastic advancement of its students. Secondly, teachers rightly regard themselves as moral guardians of their pupils at least as long as the children are in schools. Behaviour of a pupil, which deliberately interferes with the principal aim of the school or which falls short of a minimum moral requirement, is regarded as a case of indiscipline. Some of the cases of indiscipline are even strictly anti-social in nature, where mischief-making does not remain restricted within the boundary of the school. But the school itself is a society in miniature. The problem of discipline is thus in some sense always a social problem.

In the past the social aspect of the problem of discipline attracted greater part of our attention and breaches of discipline were dealt mainly from the point of view of school administration with less regard for the welfare of the culprit. It is only more recently that we have begun to feel quite intensely that the problem of discipline is equally a human, an individual problem.

This outlook puts the well-being of the individual offender to the forefront. It carefully tries to consider





whether and how far any proposed counter-measure will help the culprit to return to the path of social-conformity. In other words, it assesses the value of a counter-measure greatly from the point of reform and not from that of retribution. Our increased knowledge of human motives and behaviour has again enabled the new outlook to take a more sympathetic view of the wrong-doer, though not of wrong-doing. We are learning to understand the delinquent conduct as teleologically determined failure of social adjustment and not mischievous acts of an innately depraved heart.

The new outlook, however, has no tendency to supplant the old one: the emphasis upon the individual should not lead to a loss of sight of the effect of breach of discipline on school-society. Here fortunately, the good of the school and the good of the individual are more often the same. What the school needs is the prevention of breaches of discipline. Now an offender in his own interest, as Bagley<sup>1</sup> points out, is also to be "protected against himself." So far as the aim is concerned, we thus see that social and individual interests do not differ, though it is true that there may be some difference in the proposed method of combating indiscipline. Punishment and admonition may, for example, serve the social end, when they are effective, though in no case they serve the individual interest so well. But punishment and admonition will find today few advocates for them.\* William Healy<sup>2</sup> rightly points out, "even the simplest observations show the very great failure of these methods." A more serious argument against punishment and admonition is that they fail to pay due regard to human dignity. They lower the self-respect of the culprit as well as fail in most instances to effect any really beneficial change in the child. In short the modern reaction against punishment owes itself mainly to our interest for the well-being of the individual offender.

\* As Thorndike formulated the law of effect it appeared that the punishment could further the moral education of the child.\* In one of his recent works he however details the results of experiments he undertook during 1928-1931 which have proved that "...reward strengthened, but punishment did not weaken, the tendencies to which it was attached." (*Man and His works*, 1943, p. 150) According to Thorndike punishment thus appears to have little educational value.





The good of the individual is the modern democratic ideal. The soul of democracy lies, even if it is only professed and not practised, in the extolling of human right and human dignity above all sectional interests. The prerequisite for all struggle for human right is the conscious recognition that we are all human beings, irrespective of our age, sex or profession. It is thus mainly due to the democratic inspiration that a child is, for the first time, seen as a man and not merely a man in the making.

More specifically it is necessary to mention the general educational movement of the modern times, which started with Rousseau, who incidentally also heralded the French Revolution and all that stood for French Revolution—right and liberty of individuals. Educators felt that education to be really effective, needs the co-operation of the educand. As the old English adage goes: A man may lead a horse to the water, but he cannot make him drink.

In other words we have begun to see that the more essential thing in an effective education is the child's effort and willingness as a result of which the modern movement of "child-centered," education was born.

Thus the democratic ideal of emphasising the right of the child was greatly re-inforced by the great educators' insight into the process of education. It was immensely gratifying for us to learn that as we are paying our respect to the child's deeper wishes wherefrom we take our start and which we seek to broaden and enrich, we are also giving aid to the child to educate himself in the best sense of the term.

The modern educational theories incidentally corrected a very serious error, regarding the child's mind, an error prevailing in many quarters sometimes with a naïve emphasis in the opposite direction. The error was the tendency to regard the child as a moral degenerate unwilling to benefit by education.

Such revolutionary ideas, regarding children and their education, cannot but deeply influence the more specific





questions of reforming the more difficult and even wayward child.

The growing humanism, which ridiculed the old patriarchal notion that women and children were less than human, also set its face against the idea that a wayward child was inherently evil-minded. We went on developing our democratic ideas and we have begun to believe that even wayward and feeble-minded children have their rights. Lastly, it was experienced that no reform works unless a child is willing and ready for it.

Expressed so far, these theories are but little more than noble wishes or social philosophy. The cause of such a social philosophy was greatly strengthened by the discoveries of child psychology and medical psychology in the later part of the last century. In other words, as we have begun to grasp the workings of a child's mind and behaviour, the scientific ideas of child care have been evolved.

A conduct, we know, is always an expression of a motive. It is however easy to fall in error that we are consciously aware of all our motives. The motive, or at least a very important part of it, more often lies buried in the unconscious. A child, *e.g.*, steals and it frequently happens that he really does not know why he does so; if he is asked why he steals, he sometimes invents a reason and that is—as is known in psychology—a piece of pure rationalisation. The reason why one is unaware of the motive of his conduct lies frequently in the presence of incompatible wishes in an individual. The presence of incompatible wishes is always marked by an endopsychic conflict, which is quite often an unconscious one. The psychic conflict leads to the endopsychic repression of one of the wishes but the repressed wish does not thereby lose its power. It motivates conduct which a person is obliged to pursue with some degree of compulsion. The compulsive operation by unconscious is very apparent in seemingly motiveless theft like kleptomania. In more 'normal' cases of stealing, conscious motives dominate the picture and seem to make the inference of any unconscious ones unnecessary. The conscious motives





which dominate over unconscious ones in 'normal' stealing, we have however found are largely illusory. Sometimes those conscious motives are no more than masquerades. Any slightly serious attempt to understand why a child steals, what he steals and how he uses the money or object he steals, goes a fair length to convince the investigator of the complex psychic determinants of stealing. Generally, to a lesser extent, this applies to all other types of misconduct of children.

The first few years play a tremendously more important part in the life of any child. It orients him to the world and shapes his philosophy of life. The foremost objects of his life are his parents. The inter-action between the parent and the child leaves indelible psychic residue in the mind of the child and his subsequent experiences of men and women are largely projection of his conscious and unconscious memory of his parents.

Secondly, a child lives in an animistic, nay, in an anthropomorphic world. He sees in every object—himself and his parents. His reaction to any object is constituted largely by the fundamental reactions evoked in him by his parents.\* Even the very common eating-difficulties of children can be only adequately explained by referring the difficulties to children's unconscious wishes towards their parents, as psycho-analysts have proved by their analytical experience.†

The love and hatred, children originally feel towards their parents, are to be traced first to the parental behaviour and secondly to the psychic constitution of children, the quantity and quality of their innate love and aggression. These experiences go to form what is known as character, that underlies all conducts of children.

\* See Chapter III.

† Melanie Klein writes, "The difficulties small children often have in eating are also closely connected, according to my experience, with their earliest anxiety-situations and invariably have paranoid origins. In the cannibalistic phase children equate every kind of food with their objects, as represented by their organs, so that it takes on significance of their father's penis and their mother's breast and is loved, hated and feared like these."





Children's behaviour in their schools expresses their character, already formed, in its major part. In other words, the child by his behaviour reacts as much to the past as to the present, perhaps more to the past than to the present. The last statement is certainly true of abnormal behaviour, which is pursued regardless of the reality.

In all their new attachment and hatred children are effecting, to use a useful psycho-analytic term—a transference—*i.e.*, they are reliving the past, their mostly buried love and hatred towards their parents. This serves as the keynote to all his actions too.

We have so far considered anti-social variety of problem behaviour, which troubles teachers as problems of discipline. For obvious reasons, the anti-social behaviour in school-children makes greater demand on the teacher's efforts and therefore attracts more of his attention. The other type of problem behaviour escapes mostly any notice in a school and to that type teachers have hitherto remained in main, passive and resigned. This statement admits of one exception in scholastic retardation to which teachers always reacted more or less actively. The problem behaviour mentioned, refers to one, which is worthless and often quite harmful mainly for the child, who so behaves.

Problem behaviour, it may be pointed out here, is thus classifiable under two heads: (1) Those, which are mainly anti-social in significance, *i.e.*, they hurt the interest of people other than the child, who behaves and (2) Those, which are mainly anti-owner-of-the behaviour significance. Criminal acts are examples of Group I, while a phobia of a child, his unhappiness, anxiety-states or scholastic retardation are to be considered as examples of Group II. Though it is clear that scholastic retardation is a problem behaviour of anti-owner significance, we are inclined to treat it as an independent sub-group on several practical considerations. The most important thing for a child in school is his scholastic progress. The problem of scholastic retardation is again very frequently met with and, if we believe our experience, of all child's problems it is the most numerous.





Such a distinction in problem behaviour is drawn on social consideration, *i.e.*, by the effect they produce on the society. We should not, however, claim that classified groups are exclusive of each other. The distinction is mainly on emphasis. The psycho-neurosis in a child gives rise to difficulty in a wholesome social adjustment and, even without unduly stretching the meaning of the term 'social,' one sometimes is constrained to feel that many psycho-neuroses of children are to some extent also anti-social in nature. Yet if we do not blame them as we are prone to blame delinquents, it is because on all appearance a psycho-neurotic suffers more than he causes suffering to others. We forgive him as we forgive a person, who is physically ill.

A delinquent conduct again, though it may not be always easy to accept, is directed against the delinquent himself as it is directed against others. This statement appears greatly justified also on a deeper psychological consideration. A child told us that he began to steal from his mother after he played truant from school. As a result of truancy he suffered from a conscious feeling of guilt and (he argued) if he was already a sinner, there was no reason why he should not commit further sin. Apparently he seems to derive from truancy a sanction to his Id. One sin leads to another. In a deeper sense, however the child's argument carried another important meaning. He undertook stealing to humiliate himself, to punish himself for the offence he had previously committed, *viz.*, truancy. In a word, the stealing for the boy is as much a sin as it is a punishment. The above account may be accepted as a typical account of the psychology of many chronic delinquencies. We should only add that the guilt feeling of the criminals may not be always very conscious and that the delinquent rarely knows his real guilt, which gives rise to the perpetual feeling of guilt in him. Yet it is true that most delinquents suffer from an obsessive sense of guilt and delinquency is often a way of self-punishment.

Stekel<sup>4</sup> found that the maxim of psycho-neurotics is self-hatred. It is even easier to convince oneself that a





delinquent hates himself and his fellow-beings. The "unconscious need of punishment" plays as an important motive in many criminal actions. In some persons a sense of guilt is always present. It is intelligible that remorse and punishment are their great needs. They, thus actually commit a crime so that they may afterwards repent, feel remorse or even get punishment.

Here it is necessary to say something about delinquency, which results mainly from poverty of intelligence. It is not possible for example for imbeciles (*i.e.*, those whose I.Q. falls below 50) to understand the universal moral judgments or to apply them to concrete moral situations. It is not difficult to understand why in Great Britain indecent exposure has been found a common offence amongst imbeciles. The criminal acts, which need planning beforehand and some degree of intelligent execution in practice are however beyond the power of imbeciles. The agent of such a criminal act must be at least a moron (such an agent is sometimes one with a super-normal intelligence) but we have found that such a criminality cannot be explained by holding it as merely an intellectual defect. In most cases, the criminal act is the emotional reaction of the child to the attitude, the society takes of the child and his ability.

Investigators into delinquency have made use of the hypothesis of psycho-pathic constitution in many delinquents. It has been sometimes found that delinquency like kleptomania is nothing short of a full-fledged psycho-neurosis. Hridaya,\* a truant boy, displays for instance many psycho-neurotic or even psychotic traits, which cannot but bear an inseparable relation to his truancy.

As we delve deeper it is found that psycho-neurosis and delinquency originate from complexes of identical nature. Both of them are unsatisfactory solutions of the fundamental affective problems of ones' lives. It may be





therefore said that the problem of delinquency is as complex as that of psycho-neurosis.

We have thus understood psycho-neurosis or delinquency not as a discrete feature but as an indivisible part of a mind—the entire love and hate disposition of a person. Any attack with fair chances of success must take account of the reaction of the whole person and not merely a portion of his mind. It is possible, let us say, to beat a child and to make him docile and obedient, but in many cases it is a costly bargain, we thereby make the child hide his real self ever from us. It is not however meant that it is possible to evolve re-educative measures, which may be acceptable to every side of the mind. The struggle for reform or cure is always waging a war on psycho-neurosis or delinquency, no less than in the past, but only a more clever one, in a sense, a flanking attack instead of a frontal one. What essentially distinguishes the new war from the old one, is the following: Here our attack is not directed against a symptom but against the system of complex, which has given rise to symptoms. Secondly, the fight we now conduct is not to be described as one between us and patients, *i.e.*, delinquents or psycho-neurotics. We quickly win over an important part of the patient's mind to our side and we persuade the patient to fight, with our help, against himself, his asocial or anti-social self. The fight however is preceded by a conscious insight into the mind and behaviour on the part of a child. This at once ensures the cause of effective reform and self-respect of the offender. Healy<sup>5</sup> writes, “we stand now a days for the principle of inducing in the offender self-directed tendencies towards more desirable behaviour.”

No mind is so depraved as to be destituted of the will to live wholesomely and of social feeling. As we search, we find them even in the worst criminals. The children have their love, however repressed, never dead. We try to arouse their love in their relation to the psychologist and when we feel that their love has been sufficiently aroused we





take pains to persuade them to combat their anti-owner and anti-social wishes.

What has surprised us in our work, when we have been able to devote sufficient time to a case, is not the unwillingness of a child to reform but his great eagerness to do so. We are thus inclined to remark that one unwillingly becomes a delinquent or a psycho-neurotic. In other words, a delinquent or a psycho-neurotic, when analysed, shows that he has suppressed a very powerful wish to live happily in social harmony and in friendship with his fellow beings.

## II

Our studies in problem behaviour of children are mainly attempts at a deeper understanding of the causes, which gave rise to such behaviour. In two cases we have ourselves attempted some psychological treatment and in a few others we have let teachers know of our recommendation. The unequal distribution of our effort towards diagnosis and towards treatment owes itself to the following reasons: We are charged mainly with understanding the problem and we are not also provided with the minimum requirements for a psychological treatment of a case, by which we mean first and foremost an well-equipped clinic. It may be here pointed out that in psychology knowledge serves the therapeutic end and with a psychological case, treatment and diagnosis are not very different. We have ourselves written,<sup>6</sup> "In respect to delinquency when we have been able to know its causes, *i.e.*, have made the correct diagnosis, we have quite often also understood how to combat it and to conquer it." Psycho-analytical therapeutics are based on the tried assumption that self-knowledge cures a patient. While we thus acknowledge the supreme importance of knowledge in psycho-therapeutics, we may distinguish here the understanding of a disease by a physician from that by a patient. The former must pave the path for the latter but the former alone does not effect a cure. The earlier part of the





business may be called diagnostic work, to which the greater portion of our effort we devoted.

In our case-studies we have not followed consistently any single method of enquiry. In the problem of stealing, we have tried greatly to prove our case. Not so much in our cases of truancy, where a deductive approach was fully combined with an inductive one. It is true that no investigation can be purely inductive. Still less so is an investigation where the enquirer could permit himself no greater indulgence than ten to fifteen sittings for any one of his cases excepting two. In fine, we collected a certain amount of facts and we utilized the general experiences of previous investigators in drawing out as far as possible full psychic meaning and significance from those facts.

In our investigation we made use of a number of tests and profiles besides interviews. As there was no standardised group verbal (Intelligence) test, we devised one following Spearman.\* I translated and to some extent revised according to the requirement of our environment Burt's Revision of the Stanford Revision Test which I found to be quite useful in our work with the individual students. "I next made three profiles ready—three sets of questionnaire for teachers, parents and children to answer. Teachers, and in some cases guardians, supplied us with information regarding the anti-social conduct of the child and to some extent the nature of the child's environment. Children's answers, interpreted by us, reveal their ideas about themselves, their parents and the parental love. They also apprise us of the strength of their love and jealousy. As it was found necessary, I prepared a series of questions, each of which bore a mark. That enabled us to have a fairly accurate estimation of a child's wish to get and give love, which has been found to throw important light on the aetiology of many acts of delinquency. Children are then given a word-association test. Finally children are met in interviews."

\* *Buddhi Pariksha*—A. N. Basu and J. Dasgupta, Published by the Calcutta University Press, 1944.





It may not be out of place to say a word or two on the love-questionnaire to which I referred above. The questionnaires are based on the assumption that in regard to love there are firstly two very important conscious attitudes. They are the wishes to love and be loved respectively. A normal child displays the wish to be loved quite abundantly and in a more marked degree than an adult. Contrary to our expectation, however, we found that the wish to be loved was also present in a normal adult in quite a high degree. The mean scores of 62 children and 93 adults were found as 36 and 26.5, respectively. The low score, *i.e.*, score much lower than the arithmetic mean in the wish for love has been found to bear an important relation to a poor social adjustment, perhaps ultimately to a poor mental health in a child. The reverse is not however true. A child with a fairly high score in his wish for love has been sometimes found to be psychologically ill. The questionnaire however fortunately permit not only a quantitative appraisal but also help a more intimate psychological understanding of a child. They may be best understood as a list of searching questions, which try to shed light on many aspects of the child's love life. They reveal, *e.g.*, the child's fixations in love as well as the quantity and quality of his love—displacement, which let us know the stage, the child has reached in his emotional development.

The child, who undergoes a satisfactory all-round emotional development, displays again a fairly large score in his wish to love. The development of the wish to love often greatly furthers the cause of a child's emotional stability, *i.e.*, his mental health.

Most of our cases are boys. That is partly explained, we intensively examined, by the fact that there are a number of practical difficulties for a male psychologist to work in many of the girls' schools.

Finally we like to conclude by saying that our work has all the more convinced us of the need of a still more thoroughgoing and deeper work into the child's problem. In a very important sense the diagnostic and therapeutic works





are the same. A perfect understanding of a case involves digging deep into the buried complexes of the mind and this goes a great length to serve a therapeutic purpose. It is therefore necessary to undertake the medical task with a view to allay the suffering of children as well as to understand them. But that can be done to an effective extent only in adequately organised psychological clinics.

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# CASE-STUDIES IN THE BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

## CHAPTER I

### A CASE OF INHIBITED AGGRESSION\*

Sashi is a boy of twelve years. He reads in the class V of a North Calcutta High School. With his mother he is living at her cousin brother's place. When he was only one year of age, his father and mother separated. Till 1941 he and his mother lived with his maternal grandfather. When the maternal grandfather died in 1941, they came to live at the present residence.

He scores highest in the Group Intelligence Test devised by Mr. Anathnath Basu and myself following Spearman. He scores 75, 15 points more than the arithmetic mean score of the boys of class V of the same school. The happy deviation from the mean, however, appears much less, if we compare it to the mean score of girls (Class V) of a Ballygunge School which is 71. We would therefore provisionally put him in the category of "intelligent or just above average." His score in the Performance Test† is extremely poor. It is 10, one of the lowest scores, the highest score and mean being 30 and 19.3 respectively.

His scholastic record, if not altogether bad, cannot be regarded as good, if his ability is taken into consideration. In the annual examination of the last year he stood second. In the half-yearly examination of this year he has occupied

\* Read before Thirty-second Indian Science Congress, Nagpur, 1945.

† The Pass Along Test modified to the requirement of a Group Test by Professor G. Bose. The test was conducted by the workers of the Applied Psychology Department, Science College, Calcutta, headed by Mr. D. Ganguly.





the fifth place. But the high place he occupies does not mean much when we learn that he got only 51.5% of the total marks.

It appears, therefore, that there is no great discrepancy between scholastic attainment and intelligence in his case. A different conclusion is here however suggested if we pursue the case of Rasik. In the Intelligence Test Rasik scores 40, the lowest of all scores, while in the half-yearly examination he obtained 47% of the total marks. It may be said that Rasik has made fullest use of his poor intelligence. While no doubt Rasik shows how much an emotional balance can help a person of even inferior ability, his case also goes to suggest that Sashi has not been able to do justice to his greater giftedness. Here we may remind ourselves of the natural difficulties of a child who has to live with distant and generally not very sympathetic relations. It is not also a custom to give thought to a case unless the individual's failure in life is regarded extraordinary in proportion to his abilities. Let us, therefore, not be detained here.

I met him twice in interviews. He came rather poorly dressed. It transpired that two of his cousin brothers read in one of the best schools in Calcutta, which naturally charges a student high fees. On the other hand the school he reads in is frequented generally by poor students of the locality. It means that there is a discrimination at home. Yet he did not appear to resent discrimination. Perhaps he is made to believe that he receives as a favour whatever he receives at their hands. In him I got the impression of a sensitive boy who secretly yet intensely feels, but reluctantly expresses. He silently suffers along with his mother but for that he does not blame anyone excepting himself.

The replies he offered to our questionnaire are in many places unusual. He consistently displayed a very low opinion of himself. To the question, "State what are





your qualities," he replied with great dejection, "nothing." To the following questions his replies were:—

Does anyone ever praise you? ... Sometimes.

Do you feel that you will not be able to do anything in life? ... Often.

What do you think you look like? ... Plain.

In addition to the inferior-feelings he shows signs of guilt feelings too.

Have you ever been punished by your mother? ... Yes.

On how many occasions? ... Often.

Why? ... Because I was naughty.

Have you ever been scolded at home? ... Often.

What do you think of yourself? ... Fair.

Does God love or punish men more? ... Both loves and punishes.

In my first interview with him, when I asked him again what he thought of himself, he replied, "I am bad." Being questioned why he answered so, he said, "because I do not do what mamma asks me to do and I do not also read much at home."

Children's replies to the questions how often they have been punished and why they have been punished, throw interesting light on the development of their super-ego. A child who is frequently punished by his parents generally shows the marks of a strong sense of guilt. But the much more important thing in respect of the growth of a super-ego is the nature of a child's response to the punishment.\*

\* Here some words regarding the relation—between administration of punishment and the growth of super-ego will not be out of place. The nearest scientific view about punishment is on the line of conditioned reflex. An offence and a punishment occurring in too quick a succession will establish an inseparable psychic relationship and the thought of one will immediately bring the thought of another. The moral gain to be believed will be as following: The fear of punishment will deter the child from venturing into any similar offence. This view is unfortunately too superficial as it fails to take account of the attitude of the child. The illusion of inseparableness between an offence and a punishment on which the advocated value of punishment lies will not





That is why we should regard "why punished" as the crucial question. Sashi's answer to the question is "because I was naughty." Its implication would be better understood if we compare this reply to the replies of a few typical cases. Saila, who can be regarded as a delinquent child (reported for lying, fighting, bullying and stealing), answers to that question, "because I have told lies." He states a fact and in that utterance he displays a mixed feeling of defiance and guilt. The reply of Rabi seems still more free from any conscious sense of guilt. He says, "because I played." He thinks, "mother loves the younger brother most, therefore she is unjust." As he can accuse his mother, he does not feel the need of accusing himself much. From probably a similar feeling Anadi refrains from replying to the question. He also feels that

hold good for a child who possesses sufficient ability to analyse his experience. In this connection we cite the experiments mentioned by Wordsworth.<sup>1</sup>

A child always feels that he is punished by some persons especially his parents. The attitude a child takes towards punishment and the person who punishes is determined directly by the aggressive wishes evoked in the child as a result of the punishment. In other words the child's anger and aggression are the stuff with which he reacts, let us say, to the parental punishment. This reaction takes mainly two forms, depending on the ability and inability of the child to identify himself with his parents.<sup>2</sup> When he sufficiently identifies himself with the punishing parent, he thinks punishment as justified, in other words, he directs his affect associated to aggression against himself. In the case of a very inadequate identification with the parent, the child reacts with anger which in most instances he suppresses because of his fear of the more powerful enemy. In the first instance, the child will develop a deep sense of guilt, while in the second, the punishment will help the growth of hatred against the parents in the child. When a child is able to identify himself with his punishing parent his moral education has succeeded, may be sometimes all too well. Punishment has mainly failed to help the growth of a super-ego and to an important measure it has encouraged anti-social inclination in the child who adopts a hostile attitude to the punishment and the person who administers such punishment. It will be added here that even in the first instance the child probably experiences anger—however fleetingly—against the person who punishes him. A portion of it persists in the same form in all normal children.

The useful theoretical distinction between the effects of punishment on a person should not lead us to expect that practically they are so sharply distinguished. A child's identification with his punishing parent is always adequate or inadequate, never whole or none. As a result punishment always leads to the growth of both guilt and hate. In the case of adequate identification, the sense of guilt is much greater and it represses hatred against parents. In the case of inadequate identification the reverse holds good.



his elder brother is loved by the mother more than he and he says (in answer to the question, "what do you like to do to your enemies?") that he is out to "take revenge." We do not however suggest that Sashi's answer to this question is in any way unusual. As a matter of fact, most of the boys say, they have been punished because of their fault. This answer when taken with a few others only makes us a little apprehensive. In the temperamental profile there are some questions which aim at exploring the nature and volume of an individual's aggression directed toward the world and also incidentally measuring the quantity of aggression released. His answers to these questions are rather uncommon. But let us state them first:—

- |   |        |                                   |
|---|--------|-----------------------------------|
| (a) Whom do you hate most?*                                 | ...    | None.                             |
| (b) Whom amongst your school teachers do you most dislike?† |        | None.                             |
| (c) Whom amongst your school teachers do you like most?‡    | ...    | I like all equally.               |
| (d) What do you want to do to your enemies?§                | ... .. | I like to treat them as brothers. |
| (e) Do you ever feel angry with your parents?               | ... .. | (No response).                    |
| (f) Whom or which do you dislike most?                      | ... .. | A bad boy.                        |

The first five replies reveal that there is a powerful resistance in him against the expression of anger. His reply to (c) shows that he is not even ready to discriminate in his liking. He thinks that when he says that he likes some one, it is implied that he dislikes others.

\* The usual answer is the name of some object or of some abstract quality. By 'usual' we mean answers of more than 50 per cent of the boys. But we must admit that 'none' in reply to this question has been given quite frequently.

† The usual answer of the boys is the name of some teacher. I tried again and again to elicit from him some positive reply to this question in my second interview with him. Each time after some silence he answered slowly, "I do not dislike any one." Similar responses were also evoked when I attempted to find out if he disliked some one at home. He showed that he was not even ready to admit that there were some persons at home who did not love him.

‡ Most of the students have named some teacher in reply to that question.

§ The usual answer is "I want to beat."





The last reply is to be understood with some ingenuity. When he dislikes a bad boy, he does not dislike something there in the world. He dislikes himself—his bad self. The reader already knows that he considers himself to be bad. He of course wrote that he was fair. But we have found on good grounds, when a child writes 'fair' in reply to that question he usually means 'bad.' In case of Sashi he himself confirmed our belief in the interview. This gets also indirect confirmation from the results of the Word Association Test. I gave them a list of 78 words—a modified version of Burt's list. In his verbal reactions to these words there are 23 "bad." Two stimulus words invite, by law of similarity, such reactions. But to most others it came as his subjective valuation. It is interesting to note, in his verbal reactions "good" came almost as often as "bad." We shall not be probably wrong if we think when he says 'good,' he often only means 'not bad.' These reactions are—as Jung calls them—"ego-centric predicate,"<sup>3</sup> i.e., "extremely subjective judgments which are obviously conditioned by desire and fear."

Sashi has lost much of the natural joy of a child's mind. His world is surcharged with the excessive feeling of good and bad. Sashi consciously shows more fear (according to the reports of the teachers "he is a timid boy"), more a rule of super-ego than desire. He has taken over or introjected into himself that he must love the world and he must not hate the world. The world is not very sympathetic towards a child who does not enjoy his father's shelter. But because of fear of the hostility of the world against himself and his love of the mother, more truly because of fear of loss of love of the mother, he cannot answer aggression with aggression.

He cannot destroy others, he cannot think others bad, he must think others good. Therefore it is only possible and natural for him to believe himself bad. The presence of a self-directed aggression reveals its unmistakable presence in him when he replies to the question, "Have you





ever wished to die?"—"Yes, sometimes," an unusual reply for a child as far as our experience goes.

In the interview I got the impression that he is extremely sensitive to his mother's sorrows (said, "my mother is very unhappy" with a feeling). That probably explains why he cannot give vent to anger towards others or to the mother since by doing that he can only enhance her suffering. We are inclined to believe that in the growth of a super-ego love (and therefore fear of loss of love which may result from indifference or the death of the lover) plays an essential part. When there is no love, punishment aiming at the growth of a conscience would not achieve its purpose.

It may be said that his poor score in the Performance Test is the result of his taboo on aggression. Any specific inhibition tends to be a general one and gradually flows into other departments. The fear of one's own aggression perhaps would attack first of all the motor function since truly action is nearer aggression than thought. One who fears his own aggressiveness cannot do good in a test in which muscular exertion is necessary.

Finally his ego-ideal shows the impoverishment characteristic of a person over-burdened with a sense of guilt. The feeling of inferiority has been unable to awaken in him "a superiority striving."<sup>\*</sup>

His answers to the following questions are as follows :—

|  |     |                                       |
|--|-----|---------------------------------------|
| Have you decided what you want to be when you grow up? | ... | "I have not decided anything."        |
| What do you like to be when you have grown up?         | ... | "I want to be honest."                |
| Why?   | ... | "So that I may be good." <sup>†</sup> |

\* Franz Alexander<sup>4</sup> considers that inferior feeling is inciting while guilt feeling is inhibitive. In all such considerations, it may be suggested, one should pay adequate attention to the quantity along with quality of the feelings. The present case shows an interesting mixture of the two. The boy takes inferiority in terms of guilt, may we say, as a punishment of his guilt. That may again explain why there is so little superiority striving in his life.

† These are exceptional replies. We have not found a second similar case in the group we examined.





He shows the mark of a fixation, a rigid "wish to be good," a relatively static quality. His ego-ideal does not show the progressive thrust, the dream of a future rich in its compensatory qualities.

Lastly we come to the child's feeling of happiness in life. Ella Sharpe,<sup>5</sup> in her paper on *The Technique of Psycho-analysis*, draws our attention to the part "justification of existence" plays in normal and abnormal minds. It would not be taking too much liberty with her thought if 'joy of living' is substituted for 'justification of existence' ! Indeed mental health, to a substantial degree, is an individual's happiness. Sashi lacks progressiveness in life (which perhaps to a great extent means absence of sublimation). Let us now see if he is happy. He is not. To the question, "Are you unhappy?" he replies, "much."

We shall not discuss to any great length the love-life of the child. We may only say, it possesses redeeming features. He loves his mother perhaps too much.\* But we found that he was not unwilling to love the world, more accurately, to be loved by the world. That means his case is not so disappointing as that of the child who has withdrawn into himself. Till 1941, he lived with his grandfather. The boy was treated tenderly by his grandfather. In my first interview with him Sashi began to shed tears silently. As if he spoke to the investigator by his tears, "I am unhappy; would you please love me?" Transference seems to be possible for him; therefore also probably recovery of his mental health.

\* This was my first question when I saw him alone. "Name persons with whom you are putting up." He replied, "I stay with my mother." "With whom else?" A little reluctantly he went on naming other persons—his aunt, uncle, etc. Before concluding the interview I asked, "Have you said anything to the members of your family about my talk with you?" He replied, "I have only told my mother and none else." I was made to feel that the child and the mother remain united to each other by their love and sorrows, both living in an alien, in an almost hostile, world. This is indeed a grave danger. The child's excessive fondness for the mother and the distrust in the rest of the world are very much compatible to unite to result in a strong mother-fixation.





It has not been possible for us to understand exactly what part the absent father plays in the life of the child. He writes that his father is good and the father loves him much. In that he most probably reflects the opinion of his mother and also that he has a developed phantasy of his father.

The super-ego of the child shows too much rigidity and also there is not much evidence to believe that the child has been able to sublimate or, to use the expression of Nietzsche, to "spiritualise his cruelty." The child needs to release his aggression to some extent against the world. But if he is straightway led to do it, it will only lead to an unconscious conflict of a severe nature. He must be gradually freed, through the love-suggestion of a teacher, from the obsessive possession of good and bad.

When we would delve deeper into his mind, in all probability we shall find an Unconscious, holding opposite attitude to his conscious protestations. He says, he believes that the world is good and he is only bad. But this is only a "defence"—a feeling resulting from great fear on his part—the consequence of his belief that the world is terribly bad and hostile.

This moment the picture of the child's mind is that he is bad and he wants to destroy himself. In those the child has taken over into himself, the hostile attitude the world has taken against him.\*

\* It seems that his feeling of guilt has been reinforced from the other important source, viz., sexuality. The mind of a child is more naive, the force of repression in him is weaker. It cannot circumvent detection with the cleverness of an adult. Sashi's responses to the stimulus words are as follows:—

| Stimulus word |     | Reaction word |
|---------------|-----|---------------|
| Night         | ... | ... bad       |
| Laugh         | ... | ... crow      |
| Dead          | ... | ... house     |

He says, night is bad. Some memory-train causes "inner distraction": as a result he does not hear the next two stimulus words, he writes absent-mindedly two objects perhaps from his visual environment. He mishears the stimulus word "greasy" (ग्रीसी) as clever (क्लियर) and responds to it by "quick."





The self-punishing tendency has to some extent served to protect him against the hostility of the world. As soon as we shall uncover the self-destructive wish of the child, we shall encounter his terrible dread and anxiety regarding inimical intentions of the world against himself. As we delve deeper we shall discover lastly the child's desire to destroy the world.

To put synoptically: I. The child tries to believe the world is good, to derive the assurance that the world will not destroy him and he will not destroy the world. II. By considering himself bad he requests the world not to think him bad any more and also in that he betrays the fact that he wants to destroy the world.

Two feelings of fundamental importance in this child is therefore his wish to destroy and his fear to be destroyed. The child through his long contact with a psychologist must learn that his aggression and fear are not as potently dangerous as he imagines. He would be encouraged to "test reality." He must see that he can give vent to some of his aggressive wishes at first with the psychologist without bringing upon him in return a death-dealing counter-aggression. With a profoundly reassuring effect he will learn that thereby he does not kill, nor he is killed. He

There are good many boys who show they have heard the word all right. We can believe therefore he mishears because he does not want to hear.

| Stimulus word |     | Reaction word        |
|---------------|-----|----------------------|
| Mother        | ..  | ... God              |
| Sister        | ..  | ... Bad              |
| Bed           | ... | ... Bedsheet         |
| Love          | ..  | ... Not good         |
| Woman         | ... | ... Bed              |
| Kiss          | ... | ... Attracts         |
| Darkness      | ... | ... (Reaction fails) |

They are too obvious to need any comment. To woman and love he is both attracted and repelled (*cf.* Kiss—attracts, love—not good), *i.e.*, he shows both a wish and the associate guilt. It is to be regretted that we have not been able to take his free associations to those words.

Our therapeutic task in this connection is clear: To help the child to face his sexual wishes without superstitious fear and perhaps also with a more wholesome philosophy. Probably this part of the therapeutic task would be found easier than the task of leading him to face aggression.





must also know in the psychologist a person who can be steadfastly trusted in being able to restrain him gently from doing actual harm in anger, yet without any need of a recourse to punishment. In a word he comes to believe that there are forces of reality which hold power to save him from aggression of his own and of the world. The resolution of the complex of his "bad," in a sense sadistic, super-ego, frees his mind from its all-pervasive sway and opens up to him joys of life which are neither good nor bad, but natural.

The difficult part of the business is that in his case we can do little to improve home conditions by which we mean here relations between members of the family. The child needs in fact an extraordinary mental health to meet the adverse conditions of his life. Yet we think it is worth while to try. We believe it is possible to fortify him to face the reality at home by freeing him from overwhelming fear and enhancing greatly his power to endure frustration without developing correspondingly a great sense of guilt. The re-educative task will be greatly helped when we shall be able to convince the child of his aggressive wishes against the world. When it will be possible to remove greatly the resistance the child has set up in his mind against his aggression, there will be less need on his part to direct the affect inward and against himself. He will thus be endowed with a power to view things critically and at times with some degree of anger. When he will dare to think and say that there are lots of things in the world which are bad, the need of always regarding himself alone as bad would disappear.

#### REFERENCES

1. R. S. Woodworth—Psychology (P. 374).
2. Cf. R. Money-Kyrle—The Meaning of Sacrifice (Pp. 32, 46).
3. Carl Jung—Studies in Word-Association (P. 33).
4. Franz Alexander—'Remarks about the Inferiority Feelings and Guilt Feelings,' International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, Vol. XIX, London, 1938.
5. Ella Sharpe—'The Technique of Psycho-Analysis,' International Journal of Psycho-Analysis.





## CHAPTER II

### THE PROBLEM OF A PET CHILD

Anadi is a boy of 10 years and 7 months. His father was a clerk in a Government office, who died at the end of 1940. He is the youngest of seven sons of his parents. He has no sister. The family is fairly well-off, perhaps owns a few houses in Calcutta. Both the grand-father and the grand-mother of the child are living and they usually live with him. He is his grand-mother's pet.

He scores 74 in the Group Intelligence test, just one less than the highest score. In the Pass Along test he gets 20, a score near mean which is 19.3. The marks he obtains in the examinations are poor. They are only 28.8% of the total. In fact he fails. The case, therefore, has some claims on our attention as an individual problem, *i.e.*, a problem to the individual himself.

I tried to elicit the reason of his failure by asking him directly about it in an interview. He says that his elder brothers almost always play cards at home. He does not find a quiet nook for his study. We believe that to be partly true. That incident moreover summarises the entire discipline or, to put more correctly, the lack of discipline prevailing at home. It is a house of a poor cultural heritage. The father did not pass any University examination nor did his sons. Moreover the father is no longer there to impose restrictions on the conducts of his children. They enjoy all the fruits and freedom of the benign rule of their mother and grand-parents. Medougall<sup>1</sup> thinks that the fear of punishment plays an essential part in the discipline of a child. For this child, the father does not live to be feared. So far as the mother is concerned the child says, he fears her moderately (according to the guardian's report, he fears her 'little'). Add to this, the child has been rarely punished at home, and that for "neglect of duties"—a





very vague expression—but not for “neglect of studies”.\* The boy admits to me, he reads very little at home. But the guardian does not seem to know that. He reports, the boy studies ‘moderately’ at home.

We have already stated in Chapter I that a child’s answer to the question ‘why punished’ throws very significant light on the development of his super-ego. Anadi responds to that question without responding. The failure of response results (there are other evidences which we shall presently put forward) from his hesitation to locate responsibility. He says, “I often quarrel with my immediate elder brother mainly because of my fault.” But this ready admission of his own guilt was calculated to appease elders and it lacked depth of sincerity. To the question what do you think of yourself, he writes “good.” To the stimulus word ‘anger’ he responds by saying ‘good.’

Both his and his guardian’s statements agree that the mother’s most favourite child is his elder brother. That explains his constant quarrel and rivalry with the brother. To the question “whom do you want to defeat most,” he first of all writes, “elder brother,” erases it and writes “friends” instead. His answer to the question, what do you want to do to your enemies, betrays his real feeling. He wants to “take revenge,” he has been wronged. No doubt the child can feel like that since there is no greater gift to a child than mother’s love and one who seems to deprive him of that is his greatest enemy.

Yet he is the youngest child of the mother. There is no doubt that she loves him too. He himself writes so. When I met him he even went so far as to say that he was the favourite. That expresses most of all his wish to be first in the mother’s eyes, but probably also to some extent a natural doubt on his part in respect of that question. Such a child, thanks further to the grand-mother’s love for him, has not greatly substituted narcissism for object-

\* A quite frequent reply to that question on the part of guardians.





love. He has not despaired of love. He still hopes to be first. He says, he does not like his brother's going away. He wants to experience the pleasure of battle and victory.

His ideal reflects both his love and anger. His answers to questions are as follows :—

|  |        |  |
|--|--------|--|
| Have you decided what you want to be when you grow up? | ...    | “ Engineer.”*                                  |
| What do you like to be when you grow up?               | ... .. | “ I shall write poems.”                        |
| Why?   | ... .. | “ My name will remain in the minds of people.” |

Engineer, he says, can repair things and therefore is a very useful person. His destructive rage which originates mainly in his jealousy is causing him much anxiety and he therefore wants to acquire a power by which he can re-stitute. But engineer also destroys. By being an engineer he will therefore be able both to destroy and re-create. The relation that love-frustration and love-aspiration bear to poetical ambition is well-known. Out of 31 children only one boy besides him puts down the expression “ my name will remain in the minds of people ” as reasons of his ambition. It is interesting to observe that both the children find reasons to grieve upon for being less preferred by their mothers. It is not at all unintelligible if they dream of getting back the full or at least greater share of mother's love by attaining distinction in life.†

We do not think that it is possible to deny the presence of a progressive urge in life along with a regressive one. Yet it is not without its lessons to discover in our study that both the cases of ambition‡ receive important incitement

\* He wrote “ Engineer ” erasing the word “ poet.” That shows the dominance of love and libido attitude in him.

† Havelock Ellis observes that the ambition is at bottom a wish for love 2

‡ Some boys in their answers displayed idealism which we prefer to call aspiration. When one dreams of doing good to oneself, it is ambition, while one dreams of doing good to others it is aspiration. To cite an instance of aspiration: A boy writes, he wants to be a doctor to help mankind. The distinction does not lose its value if it is found that underlying dreams of social service often lurks egoistic motives.





from love-frustration. That warns us not to overvalue the role of unrelated instincts, and asks us to pay much greater attention to the part an instinct is called upon to play by a family situation in the family constellation.

We have already mentioned that the child is the pet of his grandmother. Now the grandmother's love is somewhat different from the love of the mother. The widespread opinion regarding it is generally true, her love is indulgence. She finds it difficult to say, "no" to her grandchildren.

We shall not make any attempt here to understand the underlying motives of the grand-mother's love. We should better describe some of its characteristics which would enable us to understand more clearly the character of Anadi. It is often easy to find that a grandmother greatly enjoys child's dependence on her and tries to keep it alive using sometimes very ingenious means. It cannot be denied that to some extent mothers, at least some of them, partake of these characteristics which led Adler to discover power motive in all love. But one should not overstate one's case. The mother's love (when the mother is very much normal) is in its essence child-centered, *i.e.*, its most important concern is neither her pleasure nor her power but the well-being of the child. The grandmother's love sadly contrasts to it for the former's egoistic flavour.

The evolution of a child's life is to be understood by reference mainly to two principles: A child at first lives by dependence on elders. Gradually he acquires power and pursues increasingly the path of self-help. It may be said, as dependence on elders does not adequately satisfy one's manifold wishes one likes to gain independence. But the indulgent child lives greatly in a magic world. He wishes and his wishes are quickly fulfilled. He derives more by dependence than what is possible for him as a child by independence.\* He remains therefore quite happy in his love-dependence, if only during the earlier part of his childhood, and does not feel tempted to pass on to the next higher

\* See Chapter VI.





stage of development, *viz.*, self-help. But by that time, the dependence has become a character with him. This may be taken as a rough picture of the history of the present case.

It has been made evident to us that this boy has built his entire life on the urge to be loved. During all the days of group testing he forced himself again and again into my attention on hundred trivial pretexts. In the temperamental profile, wherever there is any question regarding his father, he has taken care to write in bold letters, "My father has died," while the explicit instruction of the examiner was to omit the answer of the question.\* Its implication is clear. Since he is a fatherless child, the examiner ought to love him. The answers he supplies to the questions regarding the self-regarding attitude bears out this point. We shall state them first :—

Does any one ever praise  
you? ... .. Sometimes.

What do you think you  
look like? ... .. Plain.

Have you ever wished to  
die? ... .. Sometimes †.

What do you think of  
yourself? ... .. Good.

His reply to the last question is markedly different from the quality of his other replies. The reply is intelligible if we know the relation, 'good' frequently bears to 'love.' He shrewdly understands if one is bad, one would not be loved. He wants love; therefore he says, he is good. It may be believed that to some extent he regards himself good as he has been loved fairly well. We have found in our study that a morally depreciatory self-regarding attitude correlates fairly highly with one's being less loved or not loved. Regarding other ego items, he probably writes what he considers as true. Besides for a child who needs love there

\* This, in fact, was done by most boys who lost their father.

† The wish for death sometimes stands for feminine wish for love which is frequently a wish to be loved too.





is no harm in articulating them; they are likely to evoke my pity.

His personality was typically expressed in his babyish behaviour in the interview. He knows from his own experience that babies are loved most. When he writes, "babies are most happy" he expresses his wish to remain a baby.

The boy shows other characteristic attitudes of a child who is prisoner of his urge to be loved. The grand-mother, to an undesirable extent has made him dependant on her, but she is unable to make him love her in the better sense of the term. Such a boy remains self-centred with all its unfortunate consequences. Anadi writes, "I have no friends." In other words it has not been possible for him to develop such interests in his school-fellows and playmates which would have enabled him to regard them as friends. To have friends one must give as well take. In other words, friendship entails renunciation which in the best instances flows from the urge to love, and for which he appears mostly unprepared.

The inability to love his school-fellows is partly determined by his jealousy and hostility towards his brothers especially the brother who precedes him by one year and whom he regards as the mother's favourite. He talked depreciatingly of his brothers though he wrote, he loves his eldest brother most. The eldest brother is much older than the child, therefore the former can be invested, in the mind of the child, with qualities of his father. His school-fellows however resemble his immediate elder brother, they consequently evoke his anger much more than his love.\* The boy remains elder minded (since he is ego-minded), an attitude, Susan Isaacs<sup>3</sup> has found common to children of tender age.

Anadi is not happy. He has at times even wanted to die. That is partly explained by the fact that he is not his mother's favourite. But the reason also partly lies in his

\* The teacher's report goes to say that he is bully, irascible, etc.





being too much loved by the grandmother, to put more correctly, in the resultant dominant disposition of his unquenchable thirst after being loved. As a child grows up he has to make contact with the wider reality. But if he comes to the world with the mind of a baby he is soon painfully disillusioned, since it is not the nature of the reality to mother (or shall we say, grandmother?) a child. As a consequence he becomes angry—angry with the world and with himself.

Anadi does not lack ideal. He says, he has it more than one. It may appear therefore his is a life of progress. But we remember progress owes more to one's capacity of sublimation than to the development of a high ideal. We know even more. Neurotics most often have high flown ideals and relatively little power of sublimation. And neurosis partly owes its existence to the wide difference between ambition and accomplishment. Though Anadi shows some taste in poetry and music, his life is, on the whole, one which shuns exertions. During his babyhood he has experienced too little frustration in his dependance on elders. It is moreover the fate of a pet child to enjoy too little opportunities to exert and achieve. Too little power-gratification and too much love-dependance have engendered in Anadi a pleasure-loving indolent disposition. He therefore fails in the examination which may be taken as a prelude to the coming failure in his life.

#### *Recommendations :*

Anadi shows what is generally regarded as a defect in character-development. The sentiment he has grown, though may not be pathogenic, is of harmful nature since the battle of life, for a man at least, is to be won mainly by heroism and not by crying and whining. Yet, in a more civilized form, crying as one of the strongest appeal for love would always occupy some place in life. But Anadi has overdone such a sentiment. It needs important modification. The modification may follow upon a gradual readjustment of the enviromental factors. He must be





given living experiences to revise his relationship with other human beings. We should further encourage him to use his intelligence (he is an intelligent child) in order to construct a more correct philosophy of life. Intelligence is a dynamic fact; it is able to effect a lot if only it is not posited against a combination of overwhelming emotional forces.\*

The most important lever is however the child's transference *i.e.*, the child's ability to love. It has been found that he quickly attaches himself to elders. That love should be made use of in initiating him to a life of work and play.

Let us here stop for a moment to state what the boy needs. They are chiefly (1) a life of work and (2) a more reasonable attitude, greater interest in, and as far as possible, love towards the boys of his own age.

To achieve the second thing the approach must be made through play. Shall we remember here what Murray and Smith have written, "And by play enjoyed in common, the feeling of community which is present in the little child is raised to the recognition of the right of others?"<sup>5</sup> He should be encouraged to play with his school-fellows at first under the supervision of a teacher (elder). The child had occasion to resent injustice of his mother. It seems likely therefore that he would appreciate justice on the part of the teacher, an attitude which the teacher must strictly maintain. All through the earlier stages what should be carefully borne in mind is that the child is interested in all such pursuits mostly because he is interested in the love and attention of the teacher. If the teacher withdraws, the boy will immediately lose the much greater portion of his interest in the games.

If the teacher does not become impatient, the child will gradually learn to value his class-fellows as his play-mates. He would also learn the valuable lessons of social adjustment, since in order to play, players must learn to adjust to each other. It is yet not love for his fellow beings.

\* Intelligence helps a person to make a wholesome social adjustment. That explains why individuals with psycho-neurotic complaints are commonly found to be persons of less than average intellectual competence.<sup>4</sup>





There is much egoism and selfishness in a child's play. The long familiarity and the emergence of emotional qualities in adolescence would probably make him love them fairly.

We shall now consider how to lead him to make greater efforts and exertions in the scholastic sphere. There is a keen feeling of rivalry in him. To a moderate degree it may be made use of, if of course he does not react to a situation of rivalry with too great an anger or too much of distress. Perhaps he will not. If he is able to take rivalry in a sporting spirit, it will, in addition, render to him a cathartic service. This approach needs that he is to be treated as an individual within a social milieu. He will however need a good deal of more attention in the early stages than what as a schoolboy he usually gets. The teacher is not advised at present to establish an exclusive relation with the boy. That would be playing perhaps the grandmother's part in the latter's life. As a process it is uneconomic and also seems to have lesser chances of success. We would rather suggest, let the teacher take the role of his parents but be a better parent to him than the parents themselves.

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## CHAPTER III

### A CHILD'S FEAR

Lila is a small girl of three years and two months. She has been recently admitted into a nursery school. She is the second in order of three children—all daughters—of her parents. Her age difference with the eldest and the youngest child are two years and eighteen months respectively. Her father is a physician and is fairly well-off. Her mental age tested by our Bengali Revision of the Stanford Revision test appears three years and three months.

It was reported that Lila was very troublesome to her mother principally because of her timidity. A loud sound, a strange or a fast moving object terrifies her and her fear seems to be on the increase. While other children go and play she keeps near her mother and as soon as she perceives something fearful, she runs to her mother's lap for shelter. It is a physically tiring business, the mother complains, to take out the child for a walk. The mother narrated a recent experience. One afternoon she went out with two of her elder children for a stroll. When they came to a main road, Lila on seeing the running trams and buses showed signs of fear and asked mother to carry her in maternal arms. When the mother refused and threatened to return home, Lila showed willingness to compromise. She said that she would return to a quieter and less crowded part of the locality.

Lila, frustrated in her wishes, would cry unremittently and for quite a long time. Another characteristic of her crying is that she cries very loudly. She seems to be little introvertive and usually plays alone, games of sedentary nature.

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Her mother complained of another peculiarity of the child. She has already acquired the habit of going and passing stool at the lavatory. But for sometime she occasionally defecates at some corner of the bed room or secretly below the cot. She passes stool and deposits it at some hidden corner and does not let the mother know anything about it. As a result she does not get the necessary wash usual after the practice. This dirty practice, it is not difficult to understand, exasperated the mother no little.

No amount of scolding and beating is of any help. The child obstinately pursues her queer practice.

One day I happened to gain an experience which allowed me an important insight into the child's psyche and her behaviour. I took the child for a walk as I found her crying, her mother with the eldest daughter being out on a social call. I promised to buy her some chocolates and went to the same main road to convince myself of the child's fear. Curiously enough I found no signs of fear in her and she made no request to be carried. She all along displayed the curiosity natural for a child and went on watching trams and buses. Coming home she shared like her elder sister, her chocolates with a boy.

The facts mentioned above revealed an important truth. It showed us that a child responds to a total situation and not merely to a portion of it. A part derives its psychological significance for the child from the whole or more truly, from the more important part—here the human part—in the whole. In the above case the presence of mother makes all the difference. The child likes to enjoy the sheltering and comforting physical contact of the mother; therefore she feels afraid at the sight of running trams and buses. The fear in other words, serves a purpose and is sustained by the 'secondary gain' she derives from it. But how does the child come to fear running trams and buses while she is with her mother? All that we know from experiments of Behaviourist and observations of psycho-analysis is that an object can make one afraid if it is associated in





conscious or unconscious mind with an object of original fear. A careful enquiry into the home life of the child revealed that the child is not enjoying security of love at home. Her father openly shows his preference to her eldest sister and for her crying she often experiences loud scolding from her father. The mother is yet too young to be a mother nor she is temperamentally a maternal type. Besides whatever attention the child used to get from her mother, has been usurped by the new arrival. The child has not been able to reconcile herself to such deprivation. She frequently says that the charge of the baby should be left to the eldest sister while the mother should take charge of the former. This however has not been done. It is intelligible therefore that in the proximity of the mother Lila's fear of losing the mother will be evoked. A sense of insecurity encourages regression and though she is a child of three she likes to be treated as a baby. The coming and going away of the buses most probably in her eyes stand for the mother whose contact once she almost always enjoyed and which has been comparatively rare nowadays. It perhaps also stands for her father who will snatch away her mother from her. Her fear of moving buses and trams therefore is a displaced fear of losing the mother. When the mother has however left her, the child feels she has lost the former. Then the fear is not operative since one fears to lose but can only grieve over a lost love.

This account does not yet mention what part the child's aggression has played. Even a general consideration suggests that the frustration of the child must have evoked a good deal of aggression in her against her parents. The child's obstinate defiance of the rules in respect of the passing of stools shows that the child is angry with her mother. A child values her stool and as she is angry she will not give that to mother, nor will she obey the mother by going to the lavatory, which perhaps means giving her faeces to the mother in another way.

As Lila is angry, it is quite natural that she wants in a child's fashion her mother's death. This has been follow-





ed by an equally powerful fear lest that should actually happen. Such a child would again fear most—with an unconscious belief in the talion law—that she would be abandoned by her mother as a punishment for wishing her mother's death. Lila's fear therefore of a bus or of a loud sound is as much fear on her account as for her mother. She can relieve her anxiety by clinging to the mother and keeping near her. She suffers from a sense of insecurity with accompanying anxiety. Thus insecurity and anxiety we are inclined to believe, are more directly related to the child's aggression against her mother and consequent sense of guilt.

I have been a substitute in her eyes for her father. As I am behaving to her what her father usually behaves to her elder sister, she takes the role of her sister. To win the mother's love, she wishes to be a baby (regression). To win the father's love, she wishes to be her elder sister (progression). The urge to progress or regress is not an unrelated psychic fact in one's life. A child wishes to be loved and chooses mainly the path of progression or regression in response to facts in the total environment. Lila by the fact of being pacified and going with me to buy chocolate shows her willingness to compensate the loss of her mother's love by the love of her father. With me she is not afraid, most probably because she does not yet value the love of the father as much as she values that of the mother nor like mother's love she had it once and lost it now.

The observations show that a child is very much more sensitive to the human part of the environment. They also argue that any atomistic or mechanistic approach to explain and understand child's fear would prove inadequate.

Such a child can be helped only if we can successfully attack the central complex in her life. This can be done to an important extent, in the absence of a psycho-analysis, if parents are willing and able to take a different attitude towards the child.

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## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF DEFICIENT CHILDREN\*

#### *A Few Psychological Consequences of the Failure*

The successful social adjustment of a person essentially turns upon his willingness and ability to meet the social demand made on him. The frequent failures of deficient children are mostly due to the fact that the family, the school, and the wider society continue to make *relatively excessive* demand on them, *i.e.*, demands more than what they are able to meet with their innately dwarfed general intellectual ability. The failure in life is inevitably followed by a series of other psychological consequences of anti-individual and anti-social nature.

The extent of social demand made on deficient children varies very largely in different social spheres. Children with almost similar intellectual abilities are in some cases treated as most shameful failures while, in others, pass as fairly satisfactory, *e.g.*, a child with 70 as his I.Q. is relatively a normal person in a family of unskilled manual workers. If he does not suffer from an additional deficiency in his motor aptitude, other things being fairly well, he will go on executing all his life's duties. A child with such an I.Q. in the family of a professional is a source of untold worries and vexations since he is relatively so little educable in the scholastic sense of the term. It is not understood how he can earn a living without losing self respect since he cannot learn his father's trade or one akin to it.

Children's repeated failures to perform the tasks allotted to them and the eventual social disdain with which

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they are met cannot but lead to a deep emotional repurcussion in their mind. They begin to hate themselves as well as the society. When excessive it leads to overt behaviour of serious consequences.

By deficient children we mean those boys and girls whose I.Q. is less than 85.\* We shall discuss here four cases, two of whom are boys and two girls. All of them were tested by our Bengali Revision of the Stanford Revision Test. †

The following table mentions the age—chronological and mental, of the children, classes of schools in which they read, and their approximate I.Q. ‡

|    | Sex    | Chronological Age | Mental Age       | Class | I.Q. |
|----|--------|-------------------|------------------|-------|------|
| I  | Male   | 17 yrs.           | 10 yrs. 6 months | VII   | 75   |
|    | Female | 14 yrs. 5 months  | 10 yrs. 3 months | VII   | 73   |
| II | Male   | 14 yrs.           | 8 yrs. 3 months  | IV    | 59   |
|    | Female | 13 yrs. 6 months  | 7 yrs. 6 months  | III   | 55   |

A and B belong to the group of 'dull and backward' as Burt understood them while C and D may be regarded as feeble-minded or educable defectives.

A is physically quite healthy possessing average height. He appears very slow in movement and he writes very slowly using bold scripts. The hand he writes does not seem to be better than that of a student of Class V. Dull children are generally slow in their motor movement

\* The general custom is to regard 70 (I.Q.) as the dividing line. We have however considered for reasons which are important, 'backward' children also under mentally deficient.

† Though the Bengali Revision is not standardised, we have examined sufficient number of cases to claim for it a workable value. There can be however little objection against the use of the older Revision as there is a very high positive correlation between the Stanford Revision and the Terman-Merrill Revision Tests for the age groups we tested. ‡

‡ In cases of A and B we have assumed that they have reached the peak of their intelligence at 14 years. We have more reliable evidence, in case of B, to show that B reached her mental maturity even before 14. She was tested once before on 23-3-42 and was found to possess an I.Q. as high as 75. Calculating with that I.Q. she appears to have attained the peak at the age of 13 years 9 months. But it is a wiser procedure to place the peak at 14 years since by I.Q. we compare a person's intelligence with that of other human beings, and at 14 years most persons reach their mental maturity.





but he is still more slow. He takes almost half an hour to brush his teeth. His arithmetic attainment is more backward than his attainment in literature or in history and geography. He appeared lonely. His mother reports that he cannot mix with his equals nor does he like to mix with younger boys. This is explained in this way. Though he lacks intelligence he has greater information than boys and girls of his mental age. The more important reason is that emotionally he has neared adulthood and one's play, the findings of Terman suggest,<sup>2</sup> bears the mark of emotional age in addition to the intellectual one.

He does not like his equals. He is a proud boy and he will not tolerate their jeers, nor is he ready to take the humble situation he will have to take to be in their company.

A belongs to a family of successful professionals. His father is an well-known lawyer and the other members of the family are accomplished doctors and lawyers. People belonging to the professions are generally known to possess high grade intelligence. Additional confirmation of that general belief comes from their enviable success in life and the impression gained of them in my interview.

Amidst such a group of intelligent people A's dulness appears all the more marked. Moreover, he has younger sisters who have surpassed him in their educational attainment. While he is reading in Class VII and that again with difficulty, they have passed their matriculation and are reading in colleges. It is an insult both to his age and to his manhood.

The boy is fortunate in some respects. He need not earn his living as the paternal property bequeathed to him would relieve him of such a necessity. It is to be, however, noted that he is not a landlord who thinks that the exertion to earn one's living is shameful or education is only appropriate for the class beneath him. He is a member of the middleclass. But thanks to his father's fortunes, he will not starve even if he does not earn. It is however evident that there is a sting. He needs not earn because he is unable.





This he minds. Though his mother says he should not sit for the matriculation examination, he says he must pass it.

It was made clear to me that he is suffering from a painful feeling of inferiority and he is striving his utmost to compensate it by his superior attainment. His general slowness in motor movement has been already mentioned. According to the mother's report, for about a year, he has begun to walk very fast. If one sees him while walking it will be apparent that he has to exert himself much more than others to perform such a task. But for him it is not a pleasant exercise but a desperate effort to blot out the blemish that he is retarded in his movement, retarded in his life.\*

The growth of an inferiority complex is directly determined not so much by one's failures as by emotions evoked by them. The path of such a complex is paved when one is led to feel that he fails when others around him succeed. Inferiority complex thus results from the frustration of the powerful urge to rivalry which resides within every heart. In the growth of inferiority complex social opinion plays also a very important part. The influence exerted on a person by human beings is much greater than the influence of anything else. A child tends to assume an attitude towards his failures similar to the attitude taken by the person near him. According to McDougall<sup>3</sup> the child's opinion regarding himself is mostly a reflected opinion of him held by other people.

Parents and other relations thus make the child painfully conscious of his inferiority. It therefore rouses his anger. A child who because of his subnormal constitutional ability is unable to gratify his aggression to some degree by making himself really superior, will tend to suffer from an agonising hatred towards such persons. A, by one answer of his, shows that he has little faith in the

\* Sigmund Freud thinks, the striving for power is an aim-inhibited expression of sadism.



benevolence of human beings. To the question: "If a boy hits you by accident, without meaning to, what should you do then?" He replied, "I shall scold him." To my statements, "If he says, I have not hurt you intentionally" he replied, "I shall not believe in his statement." This question is appropriate to the 8 years age-level and he succeeded in all the questions of 8 years level excepting two. We are inclined to believe, both the mistakes are due to emotional reasons. The boy has particular reason to feel inimical towards other children. He has been surpassed by his younger sisters and children generally express their opinion about persons quite unchecked by any consideration of pity.

Besides his striving for superiority to compensate for his loneliness, he displays wishes to mend. To the question 'What ought you to do, if you broke something that belonged to somebody else?' he replied, "I shall mend it." To the question, "supposing it is made of glass," he again said, "Perhaps there is something to join the broken pieces of glasses so that they may cleave together." As I was examining his watch, it accidentally fell from my hand. I picked it up and asked him, "If it is broken what will you expect me to do?" "You will mend it" was his reply. He feels sorely that he is a defective child and no wonder he wishes to mend himself. He displays multitudinous wishes to mend, the great part of this energy coming from his central wish to grow into a normal person.

A very much different picture is presented by B. Her parents do not think much of her scholastic education. So she is not a problem. Her father does a clerical job and no member of the family has got any university education. The education of girls is considered a luxury and besides she will not have to earn her living. Her brothers have passed the matriculation and are reading in colleges but she is a girl and is the youngest member of the family.

She is reading in Class VII but she is truly fit for Class V. She is particularly bad in English and Arithmetic. She is also slow but not as slow as A.







slowness does not appear so ridiculous because she is not led to believe like A that it is a stigma.

Two other facts have placed her in a more advantageous position than A. She belongs to the lower middle class and she is a girl. She is therefore regularly occupied in the household duties along with her mother, duties which A shuns as unworthy. One of the reasons of unhappiness of A is that he has so little to do in his life. His mother, a highly intelligent woman showed maternal concern for the recreational activities of the boy, which are bound to be so few. But she, like most persons, is unable to go beyond her middle class prejudice to recommend for the boy a prescription of manual work. When there should be greater influx of reality—direct experience of concrete things and events—in the education of such a child, A's education shows that there is even smaller real experiences than what an average intelligent child enjoys. The boy knows all simple computations of arithmetic but he fails to recognise the common coins like double pice and eight anna bits.

B's inferiority feeling revolves not so much around her ability as around her appearance and complexion. She is not bad-looking but she is dark-complexioned. She has been led to believe that her dark complexion is her greatest defect. This shows that it is not the intrinsic nature of the deficiency that leads to the growth of inferiority complex but mostly the importance society attaches to it led to some extent by biological considerations.

If we compare B with girls of her age, she does not seem to be particularly unhappy. She is quite friendly with girls of her age with whom she does not feel sharply the great difference. Girls generally live in more concrete spheres of thought and tradition and woman's society does not encourage much abstract and universal thinking.

She is destined not to make any headway in her educational attainment. But her parents seemed to be already resigned to that fact and she is not coaxed and cajoled to attempt what is impossible for her to attain. In a year or



two she hopes to be married. If it is a good one, she will live her life happily in spite of her small innate intellectual ability.

Because of the environment, C's intellectual deficiency has resulted in positive delinquent conducts. He has been known to steal and he frequently beats his brothers and sisters.

He is an intermediate son of a school teacher of a highly neurotic type. The boy lost his mother early in his childhood. The step-mother in the family is a non-entity. The family is poor but the members of the family are educated and highly intelligent. His young brother reads in the next higher class of the school. The family is education-minded and it is believed there that he can earn his living only by being educated. His failure in scholastic education is therefore taken too seriously. He has to endure a lot of humiliation especially at the hands of his brothers.

He is, however, treated with excessive kindness by his father. The father wants to shelter him from an unsympathetic world. But it is equally dictated by the father's wish that the child should continue to depend on him. He encourages every whim of the child and prohibits nothing. It is neurotical grandmotherly love and not love of an average father. One fact will make the point clear. C, a boy of fourteen years still sleeps with his parents on the same bed in spite of the protests of other elder members of the family. The father likes his son to remain always near him.

The boy consequently has developed a pleasure-loving disposition. The father, though poor, pays for the boy's visits in the local cinemas. The boy adds to his income by stealing from his own house. The father has a bad temper and the boy imitates him by violently abusing the female members of the family.

The boy is a feeble-minded child. The studies recommended are wholly beyond his power. He is therefore simply uninterested and has even grown an aversion for





scholastic affairs—which neither A nor B displayed to any degree. He shows feelings of inferiority. He says, he is never praised; he thinks that he will not be able to do anything in life, that he has no merits. The feeling of inferiority has little stimulated him to strive for compensating it by superior achievements. The reason is that the gulf between the scholastic attainment expected of him and his ability to fulfil the expectation is too wide. The other important reason lies in the boy's wish to remain small.

He mentions that he is young and he is worthless. This has a motive. He wants others to be loving and kind to him. Due to the father's encouragement of the child's dependance on him, it has become a fixed and the most important principle in the life of the child. In other words he remained emotionally an infant in addition to his intellectual childhood. He craves mostly to get and little to achieve or to give in his life. Stealing is the easiest way of earning money especially when he knows he has no need to fear punishment. The boy needs money to buy sweetmeats and tickets for cinema shows. Incidentally stealing gratifies his anger born out of frustration and humiliation he meets as a deficient child. Occasionally he expresses it by his violent conduct.

D is a highgrade imbecile besides being an epileptic. Because of the present tradition, a foolish person is laughed at while an ill one is more often pitied. D's illness draws greater attention and in the absence of mother (D lost the mother when she was only a baby and is the only daughter of the father) she enjoys the sheltering affection of the father. The father is greatly devoted to her daughter. This has led to the deepening of the wish, as we have seen in the case of C, to remain emotionally an infant. The girl loves herself in the bodily sense and also her pleasures. She is not unhappy that she is inferior or that she is an epileptic. With a blissful and beaming face she narrated to me her 'unhappiness.' A genuine unhappiness, it may be incidentally remarked, can arise only in person who feels inferior but wishes to be superior.





She can read little, but she does not mind it nor does anyone. Her advantage is that of an ill person and of a female. She takes some part in the household work, though not much. She has her sorrows but her sorrows are not those of A or C.

We shall now draw a few conclusions from our above-cited study. Firstly, deficient children should be protected from social humiliation even more than from actual frustration. Children are very cruel. Therefore segregation of deficient children from the normal ones and a school or a class of deficient children are mostly to their benefit. We make a dull and backward child highly unhappy by too much expectation of scholastic attainment compared to his inferior ability.

This fact has been illustrated by a certain difference in lot between deficient boys and girls begotten by our expectation of their attainment. The boys are affected very adversely by their deficiency while for girls the deficiency up to a limit is often of no serious consequence.

Girls of the middle class society live a more sheltered life. Reminded too often and too unkindly of their failures and defects, boys tend to become neurotic or delinquent. Deficient children like all children need the tonic of successful and effective work. The advantages of middle class homes for deficient girls convince us of the importance of manual work for most deficient children who are not idiots or lower grade imbeciles. As far as the purpose of scholastic education is concerned there is no point as Burt<sup>4</sup> rightly thinks in making children do "hand-work, as merely handwork." But there is place for useful handwork in the life of older deficient children unrelated to scholastic aim. Such pursuits keep children usefully occupied and the consciousness of their usefulness makes children happy. We shall do positive harm to deficient children if we encourage ambition in them beyond their power. In their lives, the principle of happiness should be always stressed. In this connection we must help deficient children to make good use of their leisure hours as well





as their hours for work. Opportunities therefore should be made available to them to find work that they can accomplish.

It has been wisely said that a man is judged not by what he cannot do but by what he can. To a substantial degree this applies also to cases of deficient children. Their ability to learn, it will be found, is most circumscribed in scholastic matter, more in the execution of a literary composition than in reading, and less in drawing, modelling or singing, the last three being perhaps dependant upon the existence of special aptitudes in different degree. We must devote time and energy to find each child's "talent." Study and work which will gradually enhance his value in his own eyes and in the eye of others should be recommended. We shall thus be able to help him to adjust himself to the humble position which he will occupy in life.

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## CHAPTER V

### I

"Stealing is often exhibited in childhood as a form of compensation and even of revenge for deprivation of parental love."<sup>1</sup>

Stealing by children is a problem for the teachers of every school and for many parents. It is much more so in a school frequented by children belonging to lower middle class and it is commoner in a boys' than in a girls' school. Cyril Burt has found it to be the commonest vice amongst young delinquents in London.<sup>2</sup>

As a problem of discipline it is of a very serious nature. It greatly disturbs the peace and security of school community, the peace of teachers and students alike. The Headmistress of a primary school thought that the gravity of stealing as an offence comes only next to sexual delinquency. Yet it troubles the teachers more because it happens oftener. In frequency it is however not so high as fighting between children.

Stealing, when often committed by a child, marks him off as a young delinquent. It at once ceases to be a simple problem of discipline but assumes the gravity of an offence against the society. The young delinquent steals in the school as well as outside. There is however no reason for anxiety if the child steals on rare occasions, nor should we take a serious view of the stealing committed by a very young child. Stealing, as we descend down to lower and lower age, appears as quite frequent. If a child of fourteen steals, we must however regard it abnormal to some degree.

In one case (the case of A) we got free association of the subject. It is naturally the deepest study of all. It gives us insight into the unconscious background of the subject's mind and tells us about the impulses of the





boy which stealing symbolically gratifies. The boy is not however a habitual thief and at this moment—this we can take as a neutral fact—he has abandoned stealing.

Let us first of all give a summary account of six cases, one after another. All of them are boys. A is the oldest of them, he is fourteen years of age and reads in class VIII. He is the son of a well-placed officer in a reputed bank. He is fairly good in studies—usually obtains over 50% marks in examinations—and seems to be very intelligent. He is physically weak, appears to be timid and though leading a small group is reserved and unsocial so long as he is in the school-crowd. A and B are two brothers. B is younger than A by 4 years. B reads in class IV. He appears to be less intelligent and is tolerable in his studies—just manages to pass examinations. He seems less emotional and less communicating than his elder brother, though he is less shy in the school-crowd. They are not habitual thieves. They have practised small deceptions with their mother whom they have cheated in the matter of paying school fees. They are members of the same group, the leadership being enjoyed by the elder brother who initiated stealing and contrived plans to avoid detection. The plans were more or less meekly worked out by his younger brother who shares the spoils of their joint stealing perhaps a little less with his elder brother. They stole a moderate amount of money from their mother's trunk where money was kept. A further confessed that he had once stolen a four anna bit or a rupee—he was not sure of the amount—from the pocket of his eldest brother. It was made clear to us that he stole from parents or parent-like persons (eldest brother was much older than he, the age of the former being above 30), and he confined his stealing within the family circle. And he remembers to have done all the stealing between the ages of thirteen and fourteen.

How they stole was graphically described by A. B slept with the mother. Without letting the mother know, he took the key, handed it over to A who opened the box and took away the money and the key was restored by B to





the proper place. According to the report, the stealing from mother's cash box did not exceed four times. The detection of their last theft, though they were not suspected as thieves, dissuaded them from further adventures. A poor servant was suspected and severely reprimanded before their eyes for an offence which he did not commit but which they did. When asked, they said that they stole mainly for the advantage of the stolen money. It enabled them to buy flower-tubs, enjoy many tram and bus rides. They, with their stolen money, paid their restaurant bills. In a word, the money allowed them to enjoy pleasures otherwise inaccessible to them. Some of these pleasures were even forbidden, *e.g.*, the tram and bus rides that they undertook unaccompanied by any elder.

The stealing, (here they agree with a young woman who used to steal quite frequently as a child), gave them a joy of adventure. They were doing something dangerous. Anxiety gave them pleasure probably because it was unconsciously associated to some positive gratification of a forbidden nature. The stealing further reminded A of hunting. To the stimulus "you are opening the mother's trunk" he gave the following spontaneous association: "When I was a child of six, I used to hunt bees and kill them with the help of a bamboo-made sword. Then I and my sister played bridegroom and bride to each other." Hunting as seeking and killing acts as a middle term and associates stealing by opening mother's trunk with the sexual act which poets sometimes choose to describe as sexual hunting. The ages five and six and the ages thirteen and fourteen, we know again, have striking similarity as they both represent the height of one's sexual feelings.

Some of the objects and services they buy with their money suggest sexual pleasure and purpose only scantily covered. It is not at all far-fetched to argue powerful sexual significance of flowers or rhythmical motions of moving buses they enjoyed.





A complained that they were given no pocket money. They did not at times even know how to pay subscription to the athletic club to which they belonged. If they had to steal, it was all their mother's fault. She *monopolised* all the money earned by the father and spent them in any manner she liked. A evinced great bitterness against his mother. In his free association the bitterness was still more explicit. A expressed his rivalry with his mother on the father's money or on the father's love. He showed violent anger on that score. "I do not love my mother, I hate her. My father gave all the money to the mother, none to me." "Mother kept all money in her box (କୋଷିକା)—in her womb (କୋଷି)." "My father is a fool and my mother is a knave." "She has charmed the father." "The money belongs to the father and not to the mother. If she was his wife, we were his children. We demand equality and justice."

The above associations were quite consistent with the character of A. He said, he loved his father much (though he feared him too), while he loved the mother only moderately. In fact he hated his mother more than he loved her. Naturally he did not like that his father would like his mother so much and be so much dominated by her. He wanted to be more to his father than his mother was to the father. "My father suffered much—none loved him. I loved him which he did not realize. My father ought to have driven away the woman from his house and loved me instead." He took away money from the mother's trunk since it originally belonged to the father and he considers himself the real legatee to all that his father possesses.

The anger against the mother originated also from another important source. It is the frustration of his wish for mother's love. The mother was at the moment the *de facto* owner of the money. The money stands as a symbol for mother's love. He says, "Had I been loved by my mother, I would not have stolen her money."





The boy again feels rivalry with his father. He disliked his mother for taking his father's money. "Why should she take from the father? That is a bad taste..... I shall bring her a lot more—several thousands of money."

This however figured in the mind of the boy—as deep as we could probe—as the less important motive of his conduct. His mother chiefly was his enemy—she stole the father's love and money.

It should however be never lost sight of that stealing gratifies anger and equally also a libidinal desire. It is stealing of love, love of mother and love of father.

We had a shrewd suspicion that since A fears his father he could not express his anger adequately against him. We challenged him by the stimulus, "You fear your father, therefore you say so little against him." He accepted the challenge. He started vilifying his father but quite soon came to express his pity and tenderness for him, *i.e.*, his anger was checked by his love for his father.

A, we already noted, stole once from the pocket of his eldest brother. During stealing he not only experienced anxiety but he was further torn by a severe conflict. He remembers to have put back again a part of his stolen money to avoid detection but probably also to appease his conscience. In his free association he identified his eldest brother with his father. The eldest brother usually lived at another town. A went and lived with him for a year. "The eldest brother is our friend while he comes to our place, but he becomes our father when he lives at his own place. He is then so distant and unapproachable." Such a belief on the part of A originates more from A's mind than from objective facts. It is, to use a useful psychological term, a projection. The attitude A takes to his eldest brother therefore expresses that to his father and would go to confirm what we wrote just before. "I found that it was difficult to steal from the eldest brother. He is so kind, he spends lavishly for us to fulfil our wishes." The eldest





brother used to take his younger brother to cinema and foot-ball matches whenever he came to Calcutta. "What he would think if he knows that I have stolen even from his pocket!" he said with a feeling of evident shame in his face.\* "At his own place, eldest brother loved my *boudi* (sister-in-law) and did not love me." "If he did not love, I steal" i.e., I steal love.† This anger could not however find unchecked expression because he felt that he was loved by his brother and by his father though not to his heart's desire. Due to presence of a powerful resistance against stealing from his brother, with difficulty he could remember at all that he stole from him and he discontinued such stealing almost as soon as he began. He however never forgets that he stole from his mother and he experienced little difficulty in communicating the news to us.

These boys at that time practised homosexuality amongst themselves and had even a few affairs with their younger sister. They cherished heterosexual desire though they viewed the act also with fear.

They felt very guilty because of their sexual practices. They therefore availed themselves of the opportunity to sidetrack a part of the libido to stealing—an act which secretly (secret even to their own consciousness) gratified their sex and aggressive wishes and with which they associated much less guilt. Soon after, A joined political work in which B helped him. The anti-social motives, thanks to the peculiar circumstances of a subject nation, supplied A the psychic energy to dedicate himself to a higher social purpose for the moment—viz., wresting India's freedom from Great Britain.

\* Here is an instance where one of the parties in endopsychic conflict is love or more accurately 'fear of loss of love' (Freud) as distinct from fear of punishment. Here the ego feels the impulse to identify itself with both love and hate resulting in—what Morey-Kyle says—an internal suppression of one of the parties. The hatred in such an instance cannot but give rise to a profounder sense of guilt and unconscious need of self-punishment.

† Cf. cases of symbolic stealing mentioned by Cyril Burt in *Young Delinquent* (pp. 451 and 531). Hary, describes Burt, rejected by his youthful sweet-heart, "goes straight from his wooing, and commits his first burglary ....." (p. 451).





The most impelling motive was for him the romance of secret work—the "forbidden pleasure." By political work he gratified both the demands of his Id and his super ego.

A careful study of the lives of two boys convinces us that super-ego, the fear of a moral nature played quite a decisive part in determining sequences of their conduct. Stealing is a lesser offence than sexuality \* and political work is at least, consciously, no offence at all. All of them more or less gratified their Id; the evolution however they underwent principally appeased their super-ego. It is true that they are not habitual thieves and any generalisations regarding the character of a thief on such data will be questionable. It is better therefore to pass on to the third case.

C is a son of a lawyer. He is the eldest son of the family. He is of twelve years of age and is a student of class IV. He seemed to be of average intelligence and tolerable in studies. He seemed to be reserved though he was not a shy creature. He gave us to believe that though his distrust of his fellow beings was not as much as that of A it was much more deep-seated. He carefully tried to avoid supplying us any intimate information. Stealing is quite a habit with him. He steals mostly money, again mostly from his father's pocket. His hobby is pigeon. He has quite a good number of them. He tends them with infinite care, for 4 hours enjoys their feats of flying and somersaults in the air (he prefers flying pigeons), taking of their food, their love-making and mating. He needs money to buy more of them and to care for those already existing.

It has been communicated to us that the father of the boy was first married to a pigeon which was killed as the astrologers believed that first wife of the gentleman would die early.

\* William Healy 4 has, to some extent, described the underlying dynamics with the following words: "the conative element of the mind.....is released through the activities of what the outsider calls misconduct, but what to the doer seems a *lesser delinquency* (our italics)"





The boy is loved much by his mother but his father treats him rather nastily. The boy seems to be a perpetual offence to the father. C avoids the father with scrupulous care. He has almost developed an uncanny power to know the nearness of his father. To the latter his overt reaction is only fear.

C stole mostly from his father, especially from his pocket. He used to steal quite recklessly. Thefts were detected many a time, circumstantial evidences proved him as the culprit and he was beaten by his father mercilessly. But the punishment seemed to make upon him no permanent deterrent effect.

To the question, "Why do you steal?" he replied bitterly: "Why should I not when from the very beginning every one took me for a thief? Whenever a thing is lost, I am suspected and beaten." By his reply C expressed his grievance against his parents. But one would not steal unless one wants to. Stealing gratifies specific libidinal wishes and C at the suggestion of the father finds it advantageous to regard himself as a thief. C submitted to his father's chastisement with a stoical patience. He had however never been found to own a single guilt. It seemed to us that he derived a masochistic pleasure out of his father's beatings. One of his friends supplied us the information that he had some masochistic trait. The friend used to twist the ear of C quite unkindly—which gratified the friend's jealousy against C—but C did not seem to mind it at all. When the twisting reached a limit, C simply freed himself.

The first dream C narrated to us was found to be almost an open gratification of his death wish against his father. C *never mentioned* his father, we could persuade him little to talk about his father. C thought that mother loved the youngest son most. With those words he probably also meant that the mother did not love C as much as she loved his father. Pigeons, there are some reasons to believe, stood in the eyes of the boy for the good mother who died on account of the father and therefore must have





bated him. With the help of pigeons C was giving back life to his good mother.

D is of 15 years of age. He reads in class VII and seems to be very good-natured, while in other respects, he appears as average. His father is a clerk in a Government office. D loves his mother while he is cold to his father. The father is not kind enough to his children and D complains that the father has often beaten him. The objects he stole most while he was young were milk and sweet chutney. At the age of 13 he stole money. The amounts were five rupees, seven rupees and a few annas stolen from his father's pocket on three different occasions. He reports having stolen occasionally also from his mother. The amounts have however never exceeded one or two rupees. "Why this discrepancy? Could you not steal a greater amount from your mother?" "I could if I liked," he replied, "but by that I would have made her miserable." "I get money from her whenever I want. That is why I do not feel so much to steal from her." D then related the circumstances of his stealing from his father. "I wanted money from him in order to buy a fountain pen, but he refused to comply with my wish. I was angry and stole five rupees from his pocket. The money I however spent on other things. I took money for the second time and this time I bought with it a fountain pen."

D says that he likes no longer to steal—I think it is a quite sincere admission—but he feels a strong urge to go away from home. He dreams of dedicating himself to the cause of freedom of his motherland.

The boy took me as a friend of his in quite a short time. In fact I was made a hero by his adolescent mind. One afternoon he said to me a little shyly that he wanted to make a present of a fountain pen to me.

D gave the following spontaneous associations on the fountain pen. He began, "I do not like to take money from the father but I must have a fountain pen." He then went to enquire tenderly about the author and another friend of his. He remembered wistfully the riverside and





wished to go home. After that he added, "I bought a fountain pen with the money I stole from the father. Soon I made a present of it to a friend who lost it. I bought another pen which, though I valued it much, I lost after a short time. Now I have with me the third fountain pen I managed to buy. I feel very anxious about this pen. It constantly occurs to me that I shall be robbed of this pen by some one and I shall not be able to provide me with a fourth pen. No, I shall never part with this pen under any circumstances." Then he remembered a girl friend of his whom he likes but she does not seem to care much for him.

The fountain pen stands in the eyes of D for the male power and love, or shall we say, power to love? The wish for a fountain pen during his adolescent years reminds one of the rite of initiation into manhood of some primitive tribes. It is curious again to note that the boy is haunted by fear of losing his manhood. He fears he will be robbed of his pen by some one. Is that some one his father?

The train of thought sometimes expresses itself in reverse order. If we arrange it in proper order it is as follows: The boy starts with the expression of love—wish for a girl. Immediately he feels guilty and fears punishment. So he says that the girl does not care for him and he is afraid that he may lose his manhood. It is not at all difficult to understand that he would next try to take refuge in the security of maternal love, remembering mother by two common symbols—home and river. When the world seems to be a vanity "what can be better than returning home?"—wrote the ancient Chinese poet. Lastly he tried to satisfy himself with men's friendship (the investigator and another friend of his) since it is less surcharged with guilt and he was beginning to find it dependable. Freud has found that the first line with which the patient begins his life story has proved again and again to be the keynote of the patient's life. Let us now see what D says. He says, that he does not like to take father's money, *i.e.*, paternal love (though he steals it, ambivalence) but he wants to be a man himself like his father. D thus displays an aspiration to





self-respect which quite agrees with our estimate of his character.

By stealing for a *fountain pen* D thus asserts his sexual right which holds to some extent against his father. He is therefore in dread of punishment. We on some occasions found him in quite visible depression when he talked wistfully about death and even of suicide.\*

I found him once in a greatly depressed spirit. I asked him the reason. He could not give any. I enquired about his dream and he gave me the following one he dreamt on the previous night: "I went out on the street. I found a bus trying to run over me. I took a zigzag motion but could not escape the pursuing bus. At last I was run over. Then I found myself awakened."

E reads in class III of a Girls' High school—from where he has been recently expelled for his stealing and use of abusive languages—and he did not get his promotion last year. The latter fact is mainly explained by his mental age which is only six years and nine months. His chronological age is nine years. Compared with his jolly and lovable sister older than he by two years, he appears shy, sad and lonely. He has some friends; though usually kind he never opens his heart to them. Even his most intimate friend does not know from him that he steals. To describe him more aptly he is alone in a crowd. Though shy, he is not timid. He looks a little rude which in his case shows that he is not a love child. His father is a goldsmith and besides mother he has two sisters one of whom is older than he. They may be said to belong to the lower middle class of society.

It is reported that E steals quite frequently. He steals from his home as well as from outside. Sometimes he steals from the homes of his friends, which obliges us to take a more serious view of the offence. One of the places

\* "The suicidal impulses of our neurotics regularly prove to be self-punishment for death wishes directed against others" writes Freud.<sup>5</sup> It is thus his guilt reaction to the second part of the oedipus complex, 'others' being the father in the case of D. Henderson writes that suicide sometimes is "a gesture of revenge."





from where he is believed to have stolen quite a number of times is the pocket of a friend's grandfather's shirt. On one occasion he was caught while stealing, with his hand still in the pocket of the shirt. Questioned on the spot he admitted a number of thefts committed by him previously. Many thieves admit their guilt when they find that conclusive evidences have been gathered against them and an attempt at reform can best begin with the confession of theft.

We were able to gather from him that he sometimes took money from his mother's bed. (This was confirmed spontaneously by his sister). On one occasion he was found with a bundle of five rupee notes. He explained that he got them on a step of the stair-case of the pond as a person by mistake had left them there. As he was again questioned he changed his ground and said that he got them in a pit. It is difficult to be steadfast in one's lying. The boy was trying to minimise his offence. The money however did not seem to belong to his parents. It belonged to some one else.

It was experienced that it is difficult to establish a good rapport with the boy. He regards—this would be clear from all that he says—elders as his enemies and tries to shield himself from their aggression, whenever necessary, by lying. He (he never however lies indiscriminately) did not confide the truth regarding his stealing even to the best of his friends.

E is not happy in his parental love. They are not kind to him. But let us allow E to speak for himself. To the following questions he replies as follows:—

|  |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
| How much does your mother love you ?               | ... | "Little."                              |
| How much does your father love you ?               | ... | "Moderately."                          |
| Whom does your mother love most ?                  | ... | "Elder sister."                        |
| Whom does your father love most ?                  | ... | "Sister, though he loves me a little." |
| How often does your father punish you ?            | ... | "Frequently."                          |
| How often does your mother punish you ?            | ... | "Rarely."                              |
| How much do you fear your father ?                 | ... | "Much."                                |
| How much do you fear your mother ?                 | ... | "Little."                              |
| Do you ever experience anger against your mother ? | ... | "Frequently."                          |
| Do you ever experience anger against your father ? | ... | "Rarely."                              |





(In the word association test, to the stimulus 'father' he failed to make any response).

The poverty of the child's love-life is more accurately corroborated by his score in 'Love Questionnaire.' It is twelve only. We have so far examined 54 children between seven and eleven years\* and of all scores, his is the lowest, the arithmetic mean of scores being 37.3. The father of E confirmed the poorness of the child's love-wishes by saying that while his daughters often want money from him, E never makes any such request. It may be maintained with good reasons that a child wishes little when he actually gets little. E himself said, "I do not request my father because he never gives."

The father of E is besides cruel to E. Let us mention one occasion. When his father came to know that E stole from the house of his friend, he bound him with a rope and began to hit him most mercilessly. E therefore knows (and therefore fears) his father as one who punishes. The idea he formed about elders is the projection of the idea he could form about his father. He said that he did not love elders. Being asked, why? he said, "they are not good." He explained what he meant by 'not good' by adding "they beat me." I tried to know from him, whom he loved most. He replied, "youngest sister of mine (age four years)" Why do you love her? "She does not do anything. She *does not beat me.*"

A strange ground indeed for love! How he compares to Gouri—a sweet child of ten years—who said with a smiling face that love means caresses of and presents from elders.

He expresses his anger against his mother since he does not fear her much. Towards his father he cherishes suppressed anger, *i.e.*, the desire to aggress, the sign of

\* The differences between mean scores of the different age-groups between seven and eleven years appear as yet very slight. (The mean scores of groups above 11 years and especially the score of adults are however considerably less). So in indicating the mean value we have treated the age groups together.





which is again fear.\* The principal concern in the life of such a child is to defend himself against the aggression of elders and secretly avenge himself as much as possible.

E's important seasonal hobby is kites. It absorbs, during the few months of the kite season, most of his time and attention. During that season he commits many more thefts to provide him with money to buy kites.

There are two pleasures in the play with kites—the pleasure of flying and the pleasure of fight. By fight the child gratifies mainly his aggressive wish. By empathy the flying of kite is felt by the child as his own flying. It gratifies his will to power, and if we believe Freud “unconsciously power for sexual accomplishment” too.

It was no season for kites when we asked him “What do you like to do with the money you get”? He expressed his desire of retaining by saying, “I want to collect and hoard them.” If it is true that the wish to retain grows or at least becomes intensified by the dearth and insecurity in one's getting of love, this becomes intelligible. K and the eldest sister of E who are more happily loved said in reply to the same question that they want to spend money to buy toys and eatables.

E demonstrates feelings of guilt. He says that the father does not give him money because E wastes them on silly things. His reactions in word-associations also reveal his moral fear.

| Stimulus word | Reaction  | Reproduction        |
|---------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Stealing      | Thief     | Great offence       |
| Lying         | Sin       | Sin                 |
| Got arrested  | Thief     | Thief               |
| Police        | Cleansing | Will arrest thieves |

(He at first mistook পুলিশ for পরিকার করা. The Police cleans, *i.e.*, Punishment expiates).

\* According to Melanie Klein<sup>7</sup>, anxiety springs from aggression. “The anxiety evoked in the child by his destructive impulses takes effect, I think, in two ways. In the first place it makes him afraid of being exterminated himself by those very impulses, *i.e.*, it relates to an internal instinctual danger, and in the second place it focuses his fears on his external object, against whom his sadistic feelings are directed, as a source of danger.” She quotes a similar statement from Freud<sup>8</sup> who writes: “so then it is, after all, only the aggression is changed into guilt, by being suppressed and made over to the super-ego.”





To our question "Why is stealing an offence?" E says "the Police takes hold of a person who steals." His eldest sister who is praised quite often and who hopes and wishes to be praised more says, "because it is considered 'bad' by people." M who is a highly intelligent boy believes, "it is an offence—since the money does not belong to the thief and it belongs to another and the latter has not given him the money—that is why it is an offence."

E cherishes quite dreadful pictures of punishment. Being asked about his dreams, the child describes a number of dreams which were all anxiety dreams. He says, "Last night I dreamt of a dacoit who came and tried to cut me into pieces. I do not like to sleep therefore near the windows." His dreams were full of visions of blood, cannibalism and murder. On another occasion he narrated a "real" incident—that his father killed a thief with a spear. He had a friend in his village home who taught him stealing. One day as they were walking together along the road, the Police Inspector arrested his friend while the boy narrowly escaped by climbing on a cocoanut tree.

Those are phantasies. The only fact is that his father had a spear. The thief must be 'he' and he ended the story by imagining that the father at long last killed him for his offence. Thus there seems to be a masochism and a positive craving for punishment in him which on analysis will probably turn out as built around the nucleus of his innate passive homosexual wish.

The parents of E tried to teach him lessons of social conformity by repeatedly punishing him. E failed to conform to social rules mostly for that reason. In him parents succeeded in engendering a desire for punishment which is sustained by an ever present feeling of guilt in his own mind associated with his unconscious hostility against his parents. The feeling of guilt is however even more pronounced in the case of F. Let us therefore pass on to describe his case.

F reads in class II of a Corporation School in Calcutta. He is aged nine years. His father is a small shop-keeper.





He lost his mother three years ago. He has two brothers and four sisters. He is the youngest child. He seems to be an intelligent and a vivacious boy.

He is reported to have stolen from the school on many occasions. He steals books, sells them at shops and procures money. He uses the money mainly to buy eatables. On a few occasions money has been used as the entrance fees to cinemas. He utilizes the money more often to entertain his friends. He does not lie when he says, "I spend two or four annas for myself, I hand over the rest to my friends." The Headmaster of the school who knew all the children very intimately, confirmed the great love of F for his friends all of whom are more or less problem children. F used to steal also at home. He stole from his father.

The family life of the child is again of an undesirable quality. He says, his father loves him moderately and he is not a good man.\*

He once mentioned his dead mother. He said, she loved the sisters most. His father loves them all equally or as the boy truly feels he does not love any of his children. He did not mention his father in his reply to the question, "Name the persons who love you." The father seems to be a rude fellow. He complained that the father had driven away his eldest sister from the house. The only person, according to him, who loves him is his eldest sister.

The poverty of the love-life of the child is more accurately confirmed by the score he obtains by his replies to our love-questionnaire. The mean value of nine and ten years children's wish to be loved, it would be remembered, is roughly 37.5 whilst his score is only 17. The child's wish to get love depends to an important degree on the love he actually enjoys and it may be therefore said that the boy had inadequate gratification of his need of love.

\* In a recent enquiry undertaken by the author 'good' was found to be 90.4 per cent of 125 children's responses to the question "what do you think of your father?" Children who thought otherwise underlined the word 'fair.'





It is the practice of the father to punish the child quite cruelly. He even does not stop at beating the child while he is in the school. The boy however reports that he is rarely punished by his father and the former, this he says like E, rarely experiences any anger against the latter. He however fears the father much. He evidently deceives himself because of his excessive fear of father.

To the stimulus word 'Father' he reacted by saying 'good' but to the next two words (Fun Fight according to order) he expressed his more real feeling towards him by his reactions "bad." To be more precise, the boy displays his ambivalent emotions towards his father. F says, he likes children but not elders. He ascribes the same reason as E for his dislike of elders, "they beat me."

To the question, which things he likes most, he says "I like my friends very much" and then goes on to name them one by one. He says that he hates most who quarrels and does not give him money.

The boy's zealous love of his friends is to some extent natural for his age. It has been however enhanced by the coldness of his home. His libido has been prematurely freed to attach itself to some objects outside family. That explains his excessive fondness for his friends.

F frequently associates guilt with stealing in word association test. To both 'thief' and 'stealing' his reactions are 'bad.' The test composed of 87 words. Stealing is the forty-second word. To the first forty-one words he reacts by only 6 'good' and 4 'bad.' In his reactions to the latter forty-six words there are 22 'good' and 22 'bad.' It is never an accident that the word 'stealing' initiates the train of 'good' and 'bad' in the subject's reactions. It is natural that stealing would be his important complex centering round which there will be going on an endopsychic conflict if he has a conscience in him.

F demonstrates feeling of guilt. He says that he is "bad."\* He wishes for punishment. To the stimulus

\* Being asked why, he replied, "Because I put on bad shirts."



"got arrested" he reacted first by 'bad,' then corrected himself by the word 'good.' He explained, "I have stolen. It is good if I be arrested." To the word 'punishment' he displayed the same conflict. First he said, 'bad' which he corrected next by saying 'good.'

The punishment he imagines is terrible. He gave us the following free association: "one is punished for stealing. One would be hanged if he murders. Wine. Carriage. Police. Sergeant. Inspector. Constable." The punishment next reminds him of hanging. The matter would be more explicit if we take F's answer to our question: Whether God punishes or loves man more? He said, "He punishes. He cuts the heads of some by saw. Some men are kept hand and feet bound. Some are used as horses to draw carriages. Only the good are kept sitting near God. Those who lie are taken to Yam (the king of death). Those who steal are fried in a hot cauldron and in boiling oil." This picture he has most probably seen in some picture of hell. But at this moment he has made it his own.

A fear indicates often an unconscious desire. A fear of punishment points to the desire of committing sin and getting the punishment. An amoral creature would be naturally free of such a fear.

The boy reacted with guilt to the words of sexual meaning:—

| Stimulus Words. |                     | Reaction.     | Reproduction.                |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Sticky          |                     | Hot           | (Repeats the stimulus word). |
| Kiss            |                     | (No response) | Cannot say Sir               |
| Woman           | (shutting his eyes) | Good          | .....                        |
| Girl            | (Shyly)             | Woman         | Woman.                       |

The boy quite understands sexual-cum-guilt significance of the words. It seems reasonable to suppose that he has reached the understanding of them by his own sexual experiences. One of the important characteristics of a gang is that it initiates and encourages varieties of socially reprehensive practices. He is a good looking young





boy and the homosexual utilization of such a boy is well-known. To the word "sticky" his reaction 'hot' after an unusually long reaction time is significant enough.

We have learnt from A, who gave us copious associations on the subject, that sexuality one practises and thefts one commits are not two unrelated events in one's life. To an important extent they gratify the same urge. Stealing gratifies the deeper sexual wishes.

### III

We have completed our description of six cases. They include stealing by more normal children (A, B, C, D) as well as that by young delinquents (E and F). Stealing by normal children does not refer to acts of a young child who does not believe in any owner other than himself. Those are truly no stealing at all. Most children, however, we have some reasons to believe, steal once or twice in their lives when they are quite able to distinguish between their property and others'. It would be difficult to secure confirmation of the fact by directly questioning children. They would tend to hide. Educated adults belonging to different professions however readily confirmed our notion by their own experiences of childhood. They could so easily do so because they feel that it is not they, but their child ego who are owners of such experiences.

Stealing by normal children is characterised by the other crucial fact that such children steal only at home. We are told by a child that if he steals from home it's no stealing, he is not taking another's property, it is *his* parents'.

A expressed quite simply, the money (which stands primarily for the love of the father) he steals really belongs to him. He is prevented access to his own property. Therefore he resorts to stealing to recover it.

K, the youngest of three children of a widow, steals frequently from his mother, his brother and from his sister. He believes that he is deprived of the rightful share in





mother's love and presents. We may unite the two facts to mean that K has taken recourse to stealing to recover his claim. Stealing thus involves two contrary attitudes on the part of the thief. According to him the object he steals both does (more unconsciously) and does not (more consciously) belong to him. May we say that one can never steal (though one can destroy) unless he believes, at least secretly, that the object he is going to steal ought to have belonged to him, *i.e.*, it morally belongs to him?

Stealing by normal children may be described as abnormality of the normal. It bridges the gulf between the normal and the abnormal and emphasises the qualitative likeness of the two. It also points to the similarity of the underlying psychic motives in the two groups though the motives are of different proportions. Besides social distinction, an interesting psychological distinction may also be drawn in stealing: normal stealing and pathological stealing. Kleptomania is an instance of pathological stealing. It is a form of obsessional neurosis marked by an inner compulsion to steal.

It is unfortunate that we have not been able to mention in the paper any case which may be usually termed as pathological. It should not however be concluded that our cases do not reveal interesting psychopathological materials. Let us make our point clear. We do not regard a thief as normal who steals only or mostly for the symbolic value of an object. If this criterion is accepted we find pathological traits in most of our cases. A fountain pen is an useful thing but that should not be allowed to mask the fact that it possesses in the eyes of D much greater value than what it has to the majority of people. Consider again C's devotion to pigeons mostly for whose sake he stole money. Are they mere flying birds to him? They stand in his eyes partly as symbols for the good mother, the mother who loves him and not his father.

Stealing for courting punishment is also a strange phenomenon. In a future paper of ours we propose to discuss a case whose principal object in life is to meet





punishment. There was some evidence to suggest that C and E enjoyed father's beatings. F's vivid and eloquent descriptions of the hell and punishment give again one reason to suspect that he to some extent desires punishment.

The study of six cases of stealing has made clear to us that the psychology of stealing is a very complicated one. Stealing does not result merely from a greed of a strong order unrestrained by any super-ego because of the poor development of the latter. Let us however offer our findings in a more systematic way.

There is in stealing a very natural desire to seize an object and to make it one's own. This perhaps led Russell to remark that he considers a nursery child as abnormal if the latter does not steal. The younger a child is, the more clearly he displays the natural wish. The object however possesses meanings more than one to the mind of the young thief and it thus gratifies the child's multiple wishes—conscious and unconscious.

It will be wrong if we do not pay due regard to the unconscious determinant of stealing. The unconscious wish makes use of the symbolic significance of the object. The fountain pen for example, stands in the mind of D for manhood, the male love and power. Nor should we overlook the underlying similarity between the hobby of C and E—kites and pigeons. Both gratified their wishes to fly, which, according to psycho-analysis, has a fairly definite symbolic meaning. If we remember the law of condensation of unconscious, it will be easy for us to reconcile that C regards a pigeon as symbol for good mother and he also identifies himself with the former.

Stealing is not gratification of a simple natural desire. It gratifies one's wish to sin. It is tasting the forbidden pleasure. A said, "An act secretly done fills me with anxiety and joy." The mother of H, a girl of ten years, said H would refuse to take food when offered but she would afterwards steal and eat the same. The father of J, a boy of eleven, bitterly complained, "I cannot account why J





steals, I offer him money, he often refuses it and then steals from my pocket." It seems that a thing stolen tastes differently from the same object received as a gift. The act of stealing—the secret procurement indeed makes the difference. This is what all thieves feel to some degree. J and H may be only two exaggerated instances. The *charm of secrecy* should never be lost sight of and the root of the charm of secrecy may be found in sexuality.

Besides these wishes, the stealing gratifies the aggression of the child against his parents. Every child has some grievance against his parents more or less. The degrees of resentment are explained to some extent by the amount of privation and punishment met by children. Hatred of one's parents supplies energy to and thus sustains all anti-social behaviour and an incorrigible thief has an undying hatred of great intensity against his father. The wish for revenge, our study inclines us to believe, is the most important motive in stealing. K expressed the matter in the following words: To the question, "what would you do to your father if he beats you severely?" he replied, "I shall harm him. I shall spoil his things or I shall take three or four rupees from his pocket. I shall thus take revenge."

We shall explain why we regard the motive of revenge as the most important one. All children want to gratify their needs—needs of objects and love but the majority of them steal rarely, if at all. A few children steal quite often and as soon as we try to know their emotional attitude we learn that they cherish deep resentment against their parents. A and D demonstrated further that it is difficult to steal from the parent whom one loves. One can steal more easily from the parent whom one hates.

Stealing again is an expression of fear. Thieves are timid creatures. As children fear parents, they cannot express their anger against them openly. Such *suppressed* hatred finds expression in stealing. It is not an accident that C, E and F—all the three habitual thieves in our paper—say that they have never experienced any feeling





of anger against their father (all of them steal mainly from their father). A hated his mother relatively openly and he did not steal from her on more than a few occasions. When one's hatred is relatively conscious, it is not pathogenically so effective.

The prohibition against stealing on the other hand comes from the society, which a child soon makes a part of his own moral consciousness or super-ego. According to most authorities super-ego develops as the child identifies himself mainly with his parents and incorporates in his life parental recommendations and prohibitions. Susan Isaacs<sup>9</sup> appears to have emphasised an useful distinction in the super-ego, the controlling super-ego and the severe, sadistic super-ego. Persons, whose super-ego is mainly of controlling nature generally refrain from acts of anti-social nature. The sadistic super-ego aims not so much at controlling as at punishing its owner.

The study of minds of these young thieves go some way to refute the popular notion that delinquents and young offenders have no conscience. What impressed us again and again is the excess of conscience in them. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that their conscience shows a defective development. We are thus able to agree with Melanie Klein that "it is the excessive severity and overpowering cruelty of the super-ego, not the weakness or want of it, as is usually supposed, which is responsible for the behaviour of asocial and criminal persons."<sup>10</sup>

It is reasonable to believe that parents play an important part in determining the character of the super-ego in a child. The child tends to assume towards himself a moral attitude similar to what parents take towards him. A child who is punished often for wrong doing would tend to court in his future life punishment by doing wrong, *i.e.*, he will develop largely a super-ego of a sadistic type.

The need of self-punishment arises out of a sense of guilt. None of the six boys seemed to hold any good opinion about themselves. Four of them A, C, E and F said they were 'bad.' C accepted the rôle of a thief partly





as a result of the suggestion from his parents, especially from that of the father. A said that he has got used to beatings from his mother at regular intervals. If by chance she defers her beating at the expected time, it makes him very anxious and unhappy. As soon as he however meets his punishment he feels greatly unburdened and even happy. He dares to hope that he *will be free to do for* sometime whatever he likes, *i.e.*, he will be able to gratify his desires belonging to Id.

Punishment thus serves a useful psychic function in many guilt-ridden persons. Punishment is expiation; it lessens, if for the time being, the weight of the guilt feeling. Expiating guilt, they manage to prevent their mental equilibrium from going to pieces. The offenders however soon learn, as A said, to derive a 'secondary gain' from punishment. It becomes for them, to use the words of Bernard Glueck, a "licence to commit further crime."

Wherefrom however does come the impulse to commit further crime ?

We think that at present the following hypothesis would suffice. We shall take the case of A. As A's feeling of guilt is reduced, his mother-hate gets the uppermost of his mind and he gives relatively free play to his Id. It is, in other words, a story of aggression turned alternately against the outer world and against oneself.

Stekel found, we had an occasion to mention, that self-hatred marks all neurotic characters. It is instructive to find that delinquents also suffer from self-hatred. In a work\* with 137 children of a few schools in Calcutta, we found that a child who hates his parents (or at least one of the parents), also hates himself. There is reason to argue that the self-hatred, *i.e.*, the feeling of guilt in such cases results from the hatred of parents.

\* See Joanendra Dasgupta—"Parent Child Relationship and Child's Self-Regarding Sentiment," *Indian Journal of Pediatrics*, April, 1948.





It is thus necessary to revise our statement that parents determine the character of children's super-ego. In these cases at least the feeling of guilt is directly related to anger children themselves feel against their parents.

It is instructive to observe that except D all the boys stole and enjoyed in groups. There is no other way to counteract the painful feeling of loneliness engendered by the feeling of guilt associated with one's anti-social behaviour. The group life of children originates principally in the children's need to play and when organised it becomes in their mind to some extent an organisation against elders. A child who lives in a happy loving home offers his love to his parents and to his friends. A child who regards his parents as unloving tends to offer his whole heart to his playmates. In the case of F it is clear. He loved his sister, but now he loves only his friends. To our question, 'why do you steal?' he replied, "because my friends want me to do so." He is not lying. One is suggestible to the person whom he loves.

The evil influence of gang life has been spoken of too often. Though it cannot be denied that a gang exerts a very unwholesome influence upon its members, the root cause of its influence should be looked for elsewhere. It is not true that a gang can attract all children. It even repels many. A gang is the home for children who are already anti-social in their mind. We should perhaps make one exception in our statement, *viz.*, deficient children who commit crime without understanding them to be crimes. But such crimes form only a small minority. The solidarity and cohesiveness of a children's gang derive its strength and energy from children's love and loyalty and their intensive devotion to the gang is partly explained by their inability to love their parents.

#### IV

In our study we have found that in stealing wish to aggress is the most important factor. The child's motive of





revenge however cannot be wholly taken at its face-value. Even if we grant that anger is born out of frustration it cannot be maintained that anger bears an invariable proportion to frustration. Children differ in their innate aggressive disposition and to the same psychic situation two children will react with different degrees of resentment. Secondly, some amount of frustration is inevitable in the life of all human beings. A child wants the exclusive attention of his parents and he cannot possibly have it. Nor as our society is, can a child have his mother as his wife? The jealousy children experience as a result of these frustrations is not evidently a reaction to parental aggression. The child already hates his father—some more, some less—and the father has the delicate mission to win the child over to his side by repeated acts of kindness. We should therefore be on our guard not to be deceived. The knowledge of mechanism of projection supplies us the information that a child often projects his hatred into his father and behaves as if the father hates the former.

But we also know from our experiences that parents differ in their psychic constitution. They not infrequently complicate the issue by their hostility towards the child. Some of them fail in their duty to win their child over by bestowing love on him.

It is inevitable that children must make some renunciation in the gratification of their wishes. In more fortunate instances children find a desirable return for renunciation in love and praise from parents. When children are asked to renounce on threat of punishment merely, the situation becomes entirely unfavourable for a happy solution.\*

\* Regarding neurotics' motives for renunciation S. Ferenczi writes,<sup>11</sup> "...At the height of the transference the patient unresistingly accepts even what is most painful: clearly he finds in the feeling of pleasure accompanying the transference—love a consolation for the pain that this acceptance would otherwise have cost him. But if, at the close of the treatment, when the transference also has to be renounced, the patient were not successful in gradually finding for this renunciation, too, a substitute and consolation in reality, no matter how sublimated





Firstly there the child is unable to make common cause with his parents. Parents by their coercion become, as he has already suspected, his enemies. The prescribed conduct thus remains wholly alien to him—the first serious failure of such moral education. Secondly the child is faced with an overwhelming situation. The weak ego of the child is asked to endure a twofold psychic frustration—frustration of his libidinal as well as his aggressive wishes, the latter originating in this instance in the child's reaction to the parents' anger.

In the cases of three habitual thieves what chiefly attracted our attention was that their fathers, according to the sons' opinion, loved their sons very little. This psychological fact which initiated a train of vicious conduct in the child is the resultant of feeling of hostility on both sides which is mostly unconscious. Our therapeutic task lay at first in drawing the attention of the father to the child's need of being loved and as the next important measure we shall have to make the child conscious of his hatred against his parents. If he can own it before himself and before the psycho-therapist, the anger will lose its unconscious character and therefore much of its power to determine conduct. We found possible to undertake those two tasks in only one case, that of E.

Before we pass on to describe our experiences with E, we shall once more mention the case of F. In his case we did not get any co-operation from his father and we had to rely solely on the teachers and upon a few interviews by us—not more than fifteen in all—for any cure to be effected. The Headmaster of the school is a gentleman of kind disposition and children receive much loving attention from him. The child was nominated as a monitor of the school and was thus given opportunity to cure himself by self-assertion of somewhat sadistic nature. It is a notorious

that substitute might be, there would undoubtedly follow a relapse into negation i.e., into neurosis." We cannot expect more from a child. He must find consolation for the pain of renunciation in the parents' love for him, so that the renunciation may be really voluntary on his part.





fact that a child in power is very cruel to other children and F proved no exception. He had to be frequently prevented from cruel exercise of power and again and again had to be instructed to report and not to punish. The good thing is that he cleverly detected thefts committed in his class and he himself stopped stealing. Another very desirable change happened in the home-life of the child. His eldest sister—who according to him is the only person that loves him—returned from her uncle's place and began to stay with the child. This greatly gratified the child and his "wish for love" score rose from 17 to 32 in the second test we recently undertook after an interval of 7 months. His wish for love mostly centered around his sister and her kindness to the child. This served two purposes. It alienated the boy from the gang; he never mentioned his friends in the second test. Secondly, it enabled him to find an acceptable motive not to steal since his sister does not want him to do so.

He displayed wishes to be like his father. When he will be a father, he says, he will act as his father acts. The monitor is a powerful person. He is like elders and teachers and why not like the father. By being a monitor he has unconsciously become a father. The identification of F is of an ambivalent nature. It gratifies aggression against his father along with love for him. It therefore evokes in him the fear of retaliation from the side of his father. He says, "It is not good to be a monitor." He rationalises his fear by saying, "If you are a monitor, you must find out all mischief-makers in your class. If you fail to detect, the Headmaster will beat you"—mostly an unfounded assertion as far as I have been able to gather. The rationalisation betrays the real fear: the Headmaster, *i.e.*, the father will beat him.

Yet he has become to some extent father-like. The bulk of a child's unconscious hostility against his father, we have seen, originates from the complex that the child is a child and the father is a father. The act of being father-like (we shall remember two more facts: the mother is





dead and the sister loves the boy more than she loves the father) immediately served two purposes: it gratified his aggression against his father and secondly if he is now like the father, his anger against him as a child loses much of its point.

The power and love he enjoys seem to have helped him to introject his father-image into him. His repeated assertions that he does not steal because his father does not want him to do so are, therefore, not so senseless as they first seem. To my question, "what would you do to your child when you become a father?", he said, "I shall beat him." This he has started doing in all earnest. He has identified himself with his father and he has projected his naughty child self into others whom as father he therefore punishes.

The interviews he had with me helped him to give vent to his feeling more freely without any fear of punishment. In his last interview he expressed his antipathy against his father more openly. He did not find the worst of the three keys—"not good"—given in the profile sufficient to describe his father; he said that the father was "bad".\* We can only add that it may not be good to hate one's parents,† but if he really hates him—the conscious hatred often does the child less mischief than the unconscious one.

\* This must be noted as an unusual frankness. None of the 137 children went to the length of saying that their fathers were bad. The most they could say was that their fathers were "middling" (*op cit.*).

† In the case of F it was still more unfortunate as it indicated absence of tenderness even more than presence of hatred existing between the son and the father.

As to the children's hatred against their parents it must be owned that it is natural. At a certain period in the life of the child, J. C. Flugel<sup>12</sup> found reasons to believe, the rebellion of the child against the father helps the former to grow into a strong and vigorous character. It follows that such hatred and rebellion must not be therefore ruthlessly suppressed but the child must enjoy some freedom to express them at least in words. In other words society must revise its extreme attitude towards the hostility of children towards their parents.

In our task of re-education we were not however obliged to take any side. We could limit our work in persuading and permitting the child to talk out his mind to us as far as the little time at our disposal granted.





We cannot but however feel that the reform the child has undergone is only a superficial one. It has achieved some practical good and it is also true that in many cases we cannot have any further readjustment of environmental factors. Yet one cannot but regret that only the direction of complex propensity has been changed but the complex has not been deprived of its sting. The boy himself feels far from happy. He has not changed the opinion he holds about himself—he is bad and he is without any virtue. The readers will remember that he projected his badness into his shirt. That it has become for him a physical symbol for his viciousness was made once more clear to us by his very unusual reaction—a mixture of sorrow and fear—to the teacher's comment on his dirtiness of clothes. His parent and sister cannot be held wholly responsible for his dirty clothes. His sister who reads in a near-by school comes to school neatly dressed. He himself keeps putting on a dirty shirt—the visible emblem of his guilt and self-punishment.

Yet he has become evidently good. Let us hope he will not be bad in this or in some other way. We shall be also glad if he does not choose an anti-self solution of his emotional problem in place of the anti-social one.\*

## VII

The case of E was referred to me by his father at some stage of my investigation into the case. The boy was causing the father great worry. The father had been served with a notice from the school where the boy was reading that the latter would no longer be permitted to continue to prosecute his studies there. As the father was himself seeking assistance from me, I could therefore hope for some co-operation from him in the treatment of the case. The parental co-operation is badly needed in giving effect to measures to reform the child, where either a change

\* We learn just now that our fear has in a sense come true and the boy after a period of good conduct has relapsed into delinquency.





of home-environment or a full-fledged psycho-analysis is not possible. It may be even said that such co-operation when forthcoming often makes substantial contribution towards favourable outcome of the psychological treatment of a case.

We tried to pursue the work of reform of the child from three directions. They were revision of parental attitude to the child, arrangement of wholesome occupations and studies that are not beyond his power and lastly a few clinical sittings with the psychologist. All of them directly or indirectly aimed at removing the underlying cause of E's anti-social conduct.

Firstly, in a friendly conversation with his father we pointed out the need of revision of the parental attitude to the child and their method of training him.

We explained that the boy believed himself to be an unloved child and the punishment, according to our opinion, instead of deterring, was actually encouraging commission of the crime. It was very necessary for the welfare of the child to let him feel that parents loved him as they loved his sisters. We here suggested that the father would do well to start paying the child a small pocket money at regular intervals. It would at once convince him of the father's love for him as well as remove a pressing need for stealing by the child.

Corporal punishment should, as far as possible, be discontinued. The need however remains of keeping strict watch on him and keeping him wholesomely occupied. We cannot however expect from him scholastic progress natural to an average boy of eight. If we are modest in our expectation, the boy would find his lessons less distasteful and his teachers more acceptable beings. We could not however do much in the direction of organising some wholesome occupation for his leisure hours. I tried to persuade the father to take some interest in his harmless leisure time activities like flying of kites.

Along with these parental efforts in the social and scholastic spheres—I met him often and encouraged him to





talk out his mind to me. The rapport slowly established itself and he found in me a good confidant. The stages of his self-revelation is illuminating. He started with the description of an anxiety dream, a carnivorous ghost being its hero. He associated the ghost with his teachers. Being asked, why the ghost intends to kill him, he said, "because I committed a sin. The sin was that I have broken a tree."

A little after he added that he deliberately broke his father's hand fan. But in his reply to my question he denied that he hated his father at all.

Being asked to give association to 'stealing' he gave the following: Hair, Nose, Ear, Eyes, Hand, Leg, Finger, Tree, Figtree, Banian Tree, Flower plant.

Being asked to give association to 'father' he gave three following words: Mother, Sisters and Box. When I insisted on him to continue he said that nothing more was occurring to him. Finally he was persuaded to give the following association:

"Shoes: shoes of the father: Leg: Father's Fan which I have broken."

Here I suggested that I had no doubt he hated his father: He broke the tree, the father's fan which all stand for father or father's genital (sexual power of father). Why would he commit such aggressive acts if he has no anger against his father? Without looking at me he confessed the truth and added that he sometimes wished that his father might go away to the native village. He would be happy to live here with his sisters and mother if his father were absent.

After a few days he himself identified the robber with his father and also disclosed a very real cause of his guilt and anxiety, *viz.*, his masturbation which he was practising for sometime. He said that he wanted to cut off the hand. The statement is over-determined: it was at once wishing to castrate the father as well as himself. He was also not much late to admit that he wanted to marry his mother.





He displayed also some lurking passive homosexual wish to father, a masochistic desire which leads him to court the father's corporal punishment. He displayed the wish by the following statement: "I had an aunt who used to steal. The uncle used to beat her, kick her but she never gave up stealing." We were finally able to find confirmation to his passive homosexual wish from his admission of a real passive homosexual experience—to which he was no unwilling partner.

He also displayed, as has been already cited, positive oedipus wishes for the possession of mother as well as absence of his father.

It will be seen that his stealing stands in a symbolic relation, in the psycho-analytic sense, to his sexual and aggressive phantasies and experiences. Stealing reminded him of parts of body with a movement from above-downward, passing finally to trees which he broke. Stealing, breaking of tree and breaking of father's fan are unconsciously associated. Stealing is also associated to hand and he wanted to cut off his hand because it masturbates. Lastly stolen money helps him to buy kites as well as it reminds him of flower plants.

The first part of our work lay again and again in bringing into the notice of the boy the psychic relationship his stealing bore to his sexual and aggressive wishes. As the boy was confidently relating his inmost secrets of his life to us without meeting punishment or even reproof, it was leading to the lessening of his guilt and anxiety to a very effective degree. There was no reason to regard himself as a morally depraved creature and to believe that immoral acts are only appropriate for him. He was gradually gaining a sense of self-respect and also a social-feeling.

What, in our opinion, helped him most is the lessening of the severity of his super-ego expressed in his ever present feeling of guilt. What was therefore most pathogenic in him was his anxiety associated to his sexual and aggressive wishes. I remember an experience which led to a dramatic relief of his anxiety. Interpreting the psychic materials he





produced I remarked, "You wish to marry your mother." He looked at me very anxiously at which I added, "all children want to marry their mothers." With a dramatic suddenness his anxiety seemed to disappear and I heard afterwards from one of his friends that he communicated that important piece of revelation to his friend that very evening in a matter of fact manner.

We allowed the child to talk, but at the same time following the practice of Anna Freud<sup>12</sup> used the restraining influence of our transference to dissuade him from stealing and sexual practices. We did not however press our point with him too far just because it would then have defeated the aim we were attempting with him to attain.

Our three months' work of re-education with him has resulted in distinct improvement in his behaviour. For the last six months he has not been known to steal. His love score has risen to 31. What is most gratifying to us is that he has lost much of his guilty look. His relation with elders is now definitely better. He makes requests to them and even at times dares to disagree with them.

With him, as with most other children in child guidance work, an important part of re-education is in most cases borne by parents and teachers. When we are able to combine clinical treatment (in some cases such treatment is essential) with re-education by environmental re-adjustment we can rightly hope for a radical re-educative work to be effected in the mind and the behaviour of the child.

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## CHAPTER VI

### TRUANT CHILDREN

#### I

Truancy from school is a problem of discipline of considerable importance. Like physical violence or stealing it may not be aggressive in nature but it is sufficiently anti-social in so far as it entails quite seriously the breach of at least one important school rule.

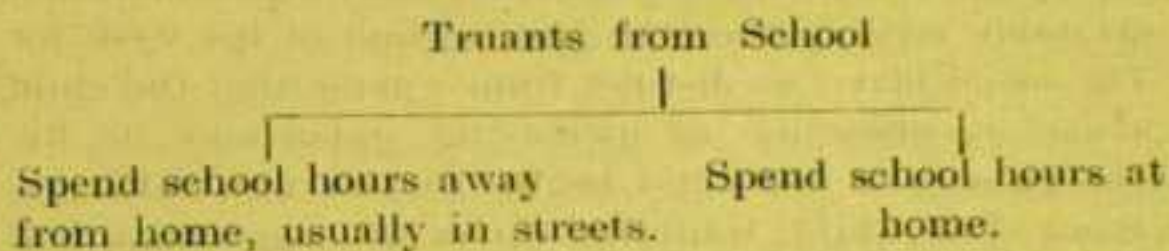
The essence of truancy of a pupil consists in absenting himself from school on no good ground. Such absence most often does not wait upon the approval of teachers or guardians either before or after its occurrence. A child may absent himself without coming to school at all or by coming to school but by going away too soon. Truancy sometimes means wandering. Many truant children pass in streets the hours during which they ought to have been working in schools. Any sensible parent will not allow his child to stay at home during school hours. Children who want to stay away from school which is one of the important reasons of truancy—can only do so by choosing to roam about through streets. For some children streets are again of impelling attractiveness for reasons more than one.

It is not difficult therefore to understand why truancy so often also means wandering. But it should not always be taken to mean so, both in faithfulness to the meaning of the English word truancy and to the fact that all guardians are not equally sensible in regard to the welfare of their children. There is indeed a variety of truancy where children, for no good reason at all, frequently keep at home without going to school. Both the varieties of truancy lead almost always to one similar serious consequence, *viz.*, scholastic backwardness. They are, however, outcome of a dif-





ferent set of psychological causes and result as well in many consequences which are altogether dissimilar. We shall have opportunities to consider in our case studies, motives and consequences of truancy of both the forms as expressed in the following table:—



## II

As one observes and reflects it becomes clear that in children's truancy from school the following causes in some proportion become always operative. They are either children's fear of and aversion to school or greater attraction of some object, person or place outside school for children or perhaps both. Let us first discuss attraction of something else which results in children's absence from school. In this connection one firstly remembers home. Children pass their early years of life at home often steadily enjoying the inimitable warmth of parental affection. No wonder that these early pleasurable experiences would lead to engender a habit—'home-fixation' if we may call it in children which will always conflict with any effort at a new adjustment on the part of children. The operation of law of inertia in the psychic sphere is an obstacle on the path of any new adventure. The rather irregular attendance of many school entrants for several months from the date of their admission can be traced to the play of the same law.

Here is an example. Dasu returns to school after the absence of a fortnight as he was ill. He finds however difficult to steady himself in his attendance and it took him about a fortnight—during which period he was very irregular in his attendance—to become again a regular student. This





happens again and again in the life of Dasu showing the influences of habit in the life of a child.

The existing mode of life gradually ceases to please the child less and less and even becomes to some extent painful for him owing to the growth of new urges in him, changed attitude of parents and last but not the least the frustration that inevitably accompanies the gratification of his wish for love. The social play—as distinct from a game that the child plays alone—becomes one of increasing importance in his life as he grows and the child begins to seek and value his play-fellows. The child wants to direct his aggression and libido on to new objects, the reason of which partly also lies in the growth of excessive guilt feeling and unbearable contradictoriness in his emotions towards his parents. Lastly the child is drawn to school because it provides him with opportunities for the gratification of thirst after knowledge and will to self-expression and self-assertion. It can therefore be maintained that the child's liking for school is an outcome of the victory of the will to achieve\* over the wish for love-dependence. In the lives of a few children love-dependence has been made the strongest urge by indulgence. They are again most injudiciously encouraged to gratify their wish to superiority in the love indulgence. In other words they are allowed to remain greatly with their belief in the infantile omnipotence by being allowed to tyrannise over their parents. It is not difficult to understand that children with such an attitude will like home more than they like school. No school can satisfy a child who always seeks love. Again and again such a child will feel the need to return home and to his parents. Here is a case of such a boy whom we met in a Calcutta Corporation School.

Akhil reads in the infant class. He is of six years of age. He possesses a good physique. He is the only child of his parents. The father is a taxi-driver who earns a fairly good amount of money.

\* It may be incidentally pointed out, that the most important motive, which play gratifies is the child's feeling of rivalry and self-assertion.





The boy was reported for playing truant. His scholastic progress during nine months from the date of his admission was very poor. He does not like his school nor his studies. He has adopted, besides truancy a number of ways to avoid studies. He repeatedly breaks his slate and tears off leaves from his book. Recently he has confided to one of his school-fellows his resolution that he would burn down the school.

The boy appeared slightly less than his age in intelligence: it was 5 years 6 months. We shall place him as a low grade average—his I. Q. being approximately 92.

The boy is a great pet of his father. The father gratifies the wishes of the boy to quite an inordinate degree. The father's excessive fondness expresses itself in his frequent buying of things, especially sweets, for the child as well as giving the latter an unusual quantity of money.

The father usually returns home at midday to take his meal and to rest for sometime. It is difficult for the boy then to stay at school and he therefore makes his way, sometimes very ingeniously, to his home. The child's early return to home is not met with any reproof from the father and if we believe the report of the maternal uncle of the child, the son's presence gladdens the dad.

The mother does not wholly like the child's truancy but she is helpless against the father and her own love of the child.

The boy appreciates the love of the father and confidently regards himself as the latter's favourite. He does not, however, think that the mother loves him and he says that he has only one friend. He shows evident signs of impoverishment in his love displacement and has come to believe that he is loved only by his father and by none else.

It is evident that the root of the child's preference for home to school lies in his excessive preference for father to others. His love for father has moreover affected his character in a deeper manner. He has developed into a child of indolent disposition encouraged by his too great a love-dependence. That explains why he detests studies.





To any attempt to draw him to a life of achievement he reacts with anger and aggression. He has found dependence on father's love as all too pleasurable.

It is instructive to consider in some detail the other aspects of the child's psyche. The child's exclusive fondness for father is paralleled by his hatred and rivalry against mother. She loves him 'little.' She is 'not good.' As facts are quite otherwise, it is only another way of saying that the child does not love the mother and he hates her. This cannot help giving rise to a feeling of guilt in the child's mind and he consequently says that he is not good and that he is bad to look at (which again are not true). It is not however possible to believe that towards the father the child entertains only emotions of a tender type. Besides the father is known to be a person of very unstable temperament (he sometimes comes home immoderately drunk). Nor can the child be wholly thankful to a father who has stifled the former's growing inner urges to make contact with the world outside depriving the child greatly of opportunities to actively assert his power and to prove his worth by keeping him attached too much to the father and to an earlier mode of gratification. The child escapes the pain of intolerable ambivalence of hate associated with a very powerful love in relation to his father by projecting his hostility on to his paternal uncle who resembles the father. To the question—whom does he hate most?—the child says, "paternal uncle."

We have not been able to determine whether the child's unconscious hostility against his father plays any part in the causes of his truancy. Possibly it does. But it may be put down that by far the most important reason why the child leaves school for home is that the boy excessively loves his father and wants to possess him exclusively especially to the deprivation of his mother.

Here is the case of another truant boy who though a mother's pet—a fact which contributes to an important measure towards the aetiology of his truancy—demonstrates a more complicated psychic dynamics than those of





Akhil. Let us call this boy Hridaya. He comes of a fairly well-to-do family. He is the youngest child of a widow. His father, however, died while he was only eight months of age in extremely tragic circumstances. The father was killed by a robber in his village home.

Hridaya reads in Class V of a High School, and is aged eleven years. He is an intelligent boy, his mental age being one year ahead of his chronological age. The intelligence was not reflected in his scholastic success, for he got barely pass marks in his last class examination. He appears to be in good health but it is not difficult to understand that he suffers from great anxiety.

He is very irregular in his attendance at school. He also occasionally plays truant on days when he comes to school by going back too early. He seems to love to stay at home. His home-mindedness is even more clearly reflected by his frequent preference of home to play-ground during afternoon. His leisure-hour pursuits have been too greatly narrowed down. He loves 'little' to play and when he plays at all, he plays only one game (*Golla chut*). Thus he shows signs of what is technically known as inhibition.

The restriction of his joys of life seems to have been effected also by his fear of life outside. He feels that he is persecuted by the street-fellows. He says, "I am beaten by them whenever I go to streets. That is why I do not like to go to streets."

Hridaya did not appear quite steadfast in his love-objects. In his reply to the question—\* "whom do you love most?" he oscillated again and again between the members of the other sex and the members of the same sex. He twice said, that he loved his mother most; on two other occasions he wholly omitted the mother and said it was his brothers whom he loved. The mark he scored in the love-questionnaire was again not satisfactory, his wish for love was only 19.

\* A number of questions was asked from many directions to elicit the truth.





His ambivalent relation to his mother was more clearly expressed in his other replies. To the question—' what do you do for your mother? ' he said, " I go and buy things from the shop when mother asks me to do so." This reply however did not wholly satisfy him and he added in the same breath, " though sometimes I disobey her." I tried to know from him why he loved his mother. He said, " I love her because if she dies there will be no one else to love me." He assigned a similar reason for loving his elder sister (a mother image). He loved her because after her marriage she would go away to another house. To the question, " what do you want to do for your mother? " he said, " I want to do something so that she may go on living."

We shall here add that such replies are very unusual as far as our experience goes. Most children say, they love their mothers because mothers love them, do things for them or mothers are good.

Hridaya is thus much worried lest he loses his mother and his elder sister. Such an anxiety, we know, always indicates an unconscious desire to lose them. It is worthwhile to try to understand the why and wherefore of such a desire. But before we attempt to do that let us consider a number of other important facts.

It has been already mentioned that Hridaya's love for his brother was not also very consistent. He disliked his eldest brother because the latter occasionally scolded and beat him. But he again believed that his brother was good as the latter alone could afford him the security he needed.

The fear and aversion he showed towards his brothers were expressed in much more marked degrees in displaced forms in his attitude to his school-fellows. The school-fellows are the most hated persons in his mind. He spoke also of the aggressiveness of teachers against him.

We shall close the description of the boy after we have mentioned two more significant psychic facts. The boy is both of an aggressive and anxious type. He suffers from occasional outbursts of temper. In his fits of anger he wants to destroy or throw away whatever he can. This he





does, it was made to some extent clear to us, in spite of himself. To the stimulus word—'anger' he reacted by the word 'bad' after a very long reaction time. We have already mentioned about his anxiety. From his responses in the Word-Association Test we come to know that he is greatly afraid of ghosts. He does not want to remain alone. He fears that a ghost will come and 'kill' him.

We have found something here which can well serve as a starting point in our attempt at explanation of the case of Hridaya. Ghosts, we know, stand in the child's mind for parent images. In the case of Hridaya, we are even left in less doubt as to the identity of the ghost he recoils from—it is no other than his deceased father. Freud<sup>1</sup> has convincingly argued that one fears a ghost because one unconsciously believes that the death of the person who is at present living a disembodied existence has been brought about by one's aggressive wishes. The father of Hridaya met with an unnatural death. Hridaya cannot but therefore feel that he, by his hostile wish, played a very important part in bringing about the death of his father. There are also quite good reasons to suppose, as we know our social superstition, that he has perhaps been occasionally accused by people of his father's death, which cannot but strongly reinforce the sense of guilt in him which he expresses by saying that he is 'bad.' It is quite natural therefore that he will be in constant dread of a retaliation from the side of his father who is at this moment a ghost. That is why he fears that the ghost will kill him.

Now a child's hostile wish against his father originates in his wish to possess his mother exclusively. But in the case of Hridaya, his hostile wish has too well succeeded, making him feel excessively guilty. To get rid of the painful feeling of guilt he has made use of the mechanism of projection and tried to believe that it is not he but his mother who is responsible for his father's death and it is not he but his mother who will die as a consequence.\* Such a displace-

\* Such a projection is probably attempted with all the greater vehemence since the child fears that the mother herself will accuse him of the father's death.





ment sometimes succeeds all too well. Here such an attempt at protection was strongly combatted by a powerful opposite force, *viz.*, the great love of the child for the mother.

The result is twofold. On the one hand, as the child unconsciously discovers his father in the other members of the same sex he greatly fears them, which further leads him to hate them. On the other hand, the guilt centering round his death wishes against the mother seems to over-compensate his love for her and makes him cling all the more to his mother and thus renders him home-minded.\* Thanks to Psycho-analysis, it is not unknown that a hate sometimes leads to seeming over-compensation of love. The underlying meaning of such an over-compensation is perhaps what may be elaborated as follows:—A love-object when threatened by a danger evokes a greater degree of anxious love in the lover. When the existence of the love-object is threatened constantly by the lover's own powerful hostile feeling, it cannot but evoke tremendous anxiety in him and he tries to render his hostile wishes ineffective by his good wishes which seems to possess in his mind magical power (in many cases also by actions which take obsessive character). The situation is made furthermore complicated by stirring up of a sense of guilt and the need of punishment in the child on account of his aggressive wishes against the

The analysis of a fatherless boy revealed, writes Susan Isaacs<sup>2</sup>, that it seemed to the boy that "it was his fault that father had died; his own hostile wishes had killed him." As a result feelings of guilt and resentment were powerfully stirred. Such feeling of guilt is not however an exception but a rule with fatherless children. "Even in the first year of life, before the child can speak, the disappearance of the father from his world awakens feelings of great grief and stirs great anxiety in the child."

\* That the hatred of mother tends to result in mother-fixation, Sibu a one year old boy showed very clearly. The weaning from the mother's breast, which he could not at all take easily, was followed by a period when he refused to be parted from his mother even for minutes. At mother's side again he was not at all happy. By his distress and frequent outbursts of anger he made both himself and his mother equally miserable. It was clear therefore that Sibu's attitude to his mother was not one of love alone. The arousal of additional quantity of hate and guilt made Sibu incapable of tolerating the absence of mother altogether. Susan Isaacs remarked in some connection: "Such excessive clinging to persons we love is always a sign of guilt towards them and anxiety about them. If love is more assured it does not need to cling so convulsively."





mother. He fears that he would be abandoned by his mother by way of a punishment. Hridaya's concern over his mother's death or his sister's going away are over-determined: it is the meeting point of his aggression directed against his mother and against himself. Not without reason therefore he tries to remain always near his mother. The child finally believes that he can only be protected against such a painful situation by his father and his love. A child cannot but feel the loss of the father as a great one. The child lost his father, who could be the child's ideal. That is why Hridaya sincerely wants his father to be back alive. It will prove to the boy that he had not killed his father. As a last resort he wants to depend upon his brother (father Image) to provide Hridaya with adequate physical and mental security. It has been found by Ferenczi<sup>4</sup> that it is not unusual for such children to adopt a homosexual attitude in their lives. In the case of Hridaya we at least find that the presence of an excessive guilt feeling associated to his wish for mother's love stands in his way to maintain a steadfast affectionate attitude towards his mother. It is quite likely, therefore, that his persecutory fear of his school fellows is to some extent reinforced as a defensive measure against his passive homosexual inclination.

The truancy of Hridaya, let us summarise, arises from his anxiety and love for his mother as well as from his fear and hatred of his school—fellows which are in the last analysis his fear and hatred of his father.

Truancy may again result from fear of and aversion to school of a more absolute nature. An excessive attachment to home results in a relative dislike of school which may grow into an aversion if the attendance at school is too much insisted upon the unwilling child. Such an aversion is secondary in nature and should be carefully distinguished from a primary hatred in the causation of truancy. The primary hatred, it is necessary to note, in many cases is in its turn reinforced by the growth of a secondary attachment to, *e.g.*, streets and play with street-





urchins. The primary aversion to school arises either from distaste for studies or from dislike of the people in school. A potent reason for the distaste for studies is the scholastic backwardness of a child. Most normal children will dislike the fact of their scholastic failure and the consequent humiliation before the class-fellows.

It will be remembered that school is a place where a child fails while many of his age succeed. It appears from the following facts collected from a Corporation Girls' School in Calcutta that the scholastic backwardness is related to children's irregular attendance at schools.\* The students taken into account belonged to Class III, Class II and Class I, their age ranging from 14 to 9. The total number of students was 125. We divided the two groups into scholastically bad and scholastically not bad; scholastically bad are those who regularly fail in examinations and not bad are those who generally pass their examinations. By regular students we meant those who during the three consecutive months of July, August and September of 1945 were present in more than 50 per cent. of the working days of the school while the attendance of the irregular students fell below 50 per cent. The results tabulated were as follows :—

|                        | Regular | Irregular | Total. |
|------------------------|---------|-----------|--------|
| Scholastically not bad | 64      | 36        | 100    |
| Scholastically bad     | 8       | 17        | 25     |
|                        | —       | —         | —      |
| Total                  | 72      | 53        | 125    |
|                        | —       | —         | —      |

To express the figures in percentage we have them as follows :—

|                    | Regular | Irregular | Difference. |
|--------------------|---------|-----------|-------------|
| Scholastically bad | 9%.     | 51%.      | 42%.        |

\* Children's irregular attendance at school—this applies all the more faithfully to students of Corporation Schools, who learn mostly while they are in schools—is in its turn a cause of children's further backwardness in scholastic progress.





It must be confessed that the difference is not statistically significant enough, the standard error being almost as high as the difference. All that we can, therefore, say of the figures mentioned is that poverty in scholastic attainment shows *some tendency* to correlate itself with irregularity in school attendance.

We have found, it may be remarked here, that interpersonal relation is of much greater significance than the person's relation to an inorganic object, all the more so, in the life of a child. A child's conduct and his likes and dislikes from which all his conducts flow are mostly his reactions to persons.\* It has been found quite often that if a child is able to like his teachers and class-fellows (this depends both upon himself as well as upon his teachers and class-fellows), if he gets opportunity to play and make friendship, he will like his school and be willing to come there in spite of his poor scholastic progress.

A school again is a hated place because it trifles with the child's nature. A school where all that is wanted from students is that they should sit quietly and listen passively to teachers cannot but be a dreaded place for children who experience irresistible urge to work with both their bodies and minds. A normal child is again very reality-minded and a school, as it is, is surcharged with unreality so far as the child is able to feel it. A boy is taught decimal and if he has average intelligence and a good memory he quickly learns to do them mechanically, in most cases, however, without any insight into their meaning or any knowledge of their fields of application. Most children are made to feel that they must learn because their guardians and

\* We have found that children's liking or dislike of a scholastic subject depended in many cases, if not in all on his love of and aversion to teachers who taught these subjects in the respective order. In some cases, we have been surprised to learn that even when a child meets with but poor success in a subject, his liking for it is not completely effaced since the teacher who teaches it is so kind and good! We know the close relationship between interest and effort and it is easy to understand that liking for a subject will lead to effort and consequent mastery in normal cases and *vice versa*.





teachers want them to do so. This cannot but be a heavy weight on any person on earth and there is nothing strange if a child despises a school.

Such schools compare disfavouredly to a modern infant school where children love to go. A modern school respects a child's wish. Like the traditional school it does not assume an inimical attitude to children, but follows children's nature and broadens them. Our experiences in *Sisu Siksha Bhaban*—a modern infant school—have shown us that students of such a school dislike the idea of any long holiday. On one occasion they strenuously fought to cut down the summer vacation to a period of fortnight.

We have already mentioned that children's intense dislike for school in many cases are in fact their dislike of more positive nature for people in the school. A disagreeable reaction to persons in school, we are inclined to believe, forms always an essential part in any thorough-going aversion to school. A person is powerfully aroused by his feelings towards other persons which are to an important extent his reactions to the feelings shown to him. A child may put up with any scholastic difficulty or even scholastic failure with comparative ease. His difficulty renders him even some advantage with a teacher of very kind disposition. But most children will resent deeply to be treated contempt by their teachers and class-fellows. It is also good to remember that a school provides children opportunities for play and companionship. A normal child cannot but highly value such opportunities and these alone, as we have found, go much to compensate sorrows that accompany his school-life. It is, therefore, easy to understand that a child who does not enjoy social games and who lacks the power of contracting friendship while at school misses this powerful compensation which for quite a considerable number of students is perhaps the only one available.

A child's dislike of the persons in school takes mostly the form of conscious fear. It is instructive to observe that quarrelsome students do not dislike their schools as do timid children. Their timidity, however, does not prevent them





from harbouring a very intense hatred against the people of the school, in fact the fear acts as an agent in the growth of their hatred. It may again be said with a little more truth that their conscious fear is also a sign of their unconscious hostility.

A child's fear and aversion to school is reducible, in its ultimate analysis, to the like feelings he has come to cherish against his parents, especially the father. In such a case, a boy's uneasiness while he is in school is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that his serenity was much affected by his anxiety while he was at home. Here is a case who while manifesting some of the character-traits of Akhil suffers in addition from a strong father-hatred which has incapacitated him from enjoying the companionship of the members of the same sex.

We shall call him Dasu. He is aged eight. He reads in Class III of a High School. He is fair in his studies, got about 45 per cent. marks in the last examination. Physically he will pass as one who manifests nothing unusual. He is average in intelligence.

He occasionally plays truant from school. He does not however go back home but passes his hours in streets. He has, however, no favourite nook where he goes and plays. He wanders in the neighbourhood often with apparent aimlessness.

His father is an employee in a merchant office. His parents have two sons and he is the younger one.

To the question, 'which place do you like more—home or school?' he replied, "I dislike home." To be more to the point, he should have mentioned his *liking* for any of the places. It would be clear, as we proceed on, that it was not an accident why he chose a verb signifying aversion to answer my question. He indeed dislikes home and he dislikes schools because of his aversion towards home.

He believes that he is loved much by his mother while neither his father nor his brother loves him. He mentioned mother and father as respectively the objects he most liked and disliked. He, however, greatly fears his father





and never experiences any anger against him. (!) He said that the father punished him because the servants refused to serve at their place any longer. He believes that only persons like his father and brother are happy and as for himself he is unhappy. Lastly he said that he enjoyed his lonely hours.

He says, he has only one friend and likes the friend all right. He is however never friendly with his teachers and he cast at me suspicious glances during all my interviews with him. Quite often he failed to understand me and I had to repeat my questions more than once.

The difficulty he experienced in responding to my friendly overtures was fear and suspicion of me, for ultimately, I stood for his father in his eyes. This fear is greatly related to his hostile wish against his father, a wish which the father again by his hatred of the child has encouraged. The greater portion of provocation is supplied, as is always the case, by his jealousy on the score of the love and possession of the mother. He wants the love of the mother, therefore he hates the father, the rival. He consequently expects retaliation from the father's side and such an expectation the father has to some extent fulfilled by his cruelty and coldness to the child, resulting in a great re-inforcement of Dasu's worst belief. This expectation explains Dasu's suspiciousness and anxiety and why he is not happy in the school. He does not want to go back home \*—school is better than home—but streets are still better since he does not like to make contact with father-like persons.

We shall now pass on to describe our last case of truancy. Priya is a boy who was played upon by a number of unfortunate environmental facts. His suffering impresses one at the very first sight. He is a boy of eleven but his mental age is not greater than 7 years 3 months.

\* He was once for some reasons asked to go home earlier than usual by the Headmaster. He refused to go on the ground that parents will rebuke him for going away too soon from the school.





He is poor to a very extreme degree. He lost his father when he was quite young. He reads in Class III of a Corporation School and he scored only 15% marks in the last annual examination, such scores being nothing unusual for him.

The family of Priya consists of his mother, elder sister and himself. At present the mother earns the bread for the family by work of a manual nature and she eagerly looks forward to days when Priya will be able to add something to their present income. Priya shares the wish of the mother. He says that he wants to grow up and earn money for his mother and sister.

The scholastic and family demands, which he, in concurrence with his mother's wishes, has imposed on himself, cannot but produce a seriously distressing effect. He has not been able to forgive himself for the inevitable frustration he has met again and again especially in the scholastic sphere. He has consequently developed a strong sense of guilt and a feeling of his utter worthlessness. He says that he is bad and he does not believe that he will be able to do anything in life.

The death of the father, as such an event almost always does, has augmented even more directly the sense of guilt and the need of self-punishment in him. I found him with a bandage on his head. He has hurt himself by falling down accidentally (!) from a low roof. Such an accident, the Headmaster told me, was nothing unusual for the boy. "He is very careless," remarked the Headmaster. The boy suffers from a phobia of dogs. The phobia is in all probability nothing but fear of retaliation from the father whose death, Priya unconsciously believes, he has brought about by his patricidal wish.

With such a feeling of guilt Priya cannot believe that the mother loves him. He feels, he does not deserve to be loved. With tears in his eyes he said, "mother does not love me at all. She loves the sister." In inculcating such a feeling in him, we have already mentioned that the mother has also played her share. She wants and expects





of Priya to do the impossible. She frequently punishes Priya for his poor success in his studies.

Priya seeks to escape from the intolerable situations in school and at home by choosing to play in streets. No child can live without a minimum quantity of pleasure in life. Priya finds both forgetfulness and pleasure in streets which his home and school deny to him.

Psychologically the problem of Priya is rather simple. He is an intellectually misunderstood child. A misunderstanding of his abilities by his mother and teachers is the source wherefrom the major part of his problems of behaviour have started.

We have thus been able to distinguish between two types of truancy from school. In the one case it is caused mainly by an excessive attachment to home; in the other, the causes which have encouraged truancy from school are more or less those which operate in creating an aversion to and even truancy from home. We are thus landed from truancy from school into truancy from home and a consideration of a case of truancy from home may be found to throw some additional light on the problem of truancy from school. It is all the more so because we had a very close and intimate access into the mind of the child whose history we are going to narrate.

It is the story of an adolescent boy who is about fourteen years of age. He reads in Class IX of a Calcutta High School. He is a timid boy who displays a marked ambivalent relationship to mother. The boy began the practice of a number of misconducts at the height of his growing sexual urges. He cheated his mother in matters of money, played occasionally truant from school, enjoyed topics of great sexual flavour with his boy-friends.

On one occasion he left home after being beaten by his mother in course of a quarrel with her. He went out with the avowed purpose of making mother suffer for him. "I shall make her pass through great anxiety on account of me." It was made clear to us that the boy less consciously but no less surely strove to gratify his need of self-punishment and





expiation by his flight and consequent physical and mental discomfort. He said that he was sometimes apprehensive of abandonment by his mother. He was asked to leave home on several occasions by his mother. So he was doing it now. "It is better to leave than to be driven out," he spoke with great bitterness. Why he did not know, but he felt that he would find life outside happier than his life at home. "I know I shall miss the mother but I shall surely find there some one to love me. No, I shall die." He gave me to understand that he was very unhappy at home because of the frustration of his sexual and aggressive desires. To him the thought of Horace well applies that the traveller by his ceaseless wanderings attempts to escape from himself.

The boy's flight is not to be taken as a simple reaction to the mother's punishment. He displays quite an appreciable amount of hatred against his mother mainly as a result of which he fears abandonment by the same. The boy's hatred against his mother is intelligible if we believe that his great love for her has met with an equally profound frustration. The frustration has not been able however to extinguish love, but it has given birth to a great hatred against his mother alongside his great love for her.

The feelings and behaviour of the boy demonstrate the conflicts and cross-purposes of many adolescent hearts. To the mother he yet retains his powerful infantile attachment. There also grows in him an attraction of life and love outside home. The flight curiously satisfied both the contradictory purposes of the boy: by flight he hoped to get back more of the mother's love. Moreover it was an attempt, however weak, to get away from home to meet the life outside. The flight satisfied another set of wishes and the latter centered around aggression. It was undertaken to cause suffering both to the mother (revenge) and to the boy himself (punishment).

It may be said with some justification that the boy resorts to physical flight because psychically he has yet remained too attached to his mother. In another sense the flight is again an aggression against himself because he





cannot do without mother's love. Finally we may repeat that the flight is an abortive attempt on the part of the boy to break away from the mother, or to speak more correctly, from his mother-complex *i.e.*, from himself.

#### IV

Of the four cases mentioned in Section II, Priya's case seems to offer the least difficulty. If his teachers and his mother are willing to take full cognizance of the mental age of the boy, it will help the boy much. It will however involve two things. The mother of the boy should be able to resign herself to, humbler expectation of the boy and to make a more suitable arrangement for his education. His I.Q. is 66. It is not possible to believe that he will be able to make use of the school-instruction suitable for an average child. He needs coaching in a special class or in a special school. That however would involve some expense on the part of his guardian who is very poor. It is not possible for her to engage for him a private tutor who possesses special training to teach backward children. We are thus obliged to recommend to him some work of manual nature which will give him scope for self-expression and self-assertion now and which will prepare him for a vocation in the future.

Dasu appears to be settling down in his school. He quickly responds to the law of inertia. As he is becoming an old student, he is becoming more and more regular in his attendance at school.

With Akhil we can perhaps do little unless his parents are ready to revise their attitude towards the child. The father himself does not care much for the child's education and while he himself indirectly encourages the child's truancy, it is very difficult to effect any change in the child.

We can recommend nothing short of a psycho-analysis to Hridaya. His truancy from school, his persecutory fears of his school-fellows, his unnatural home-mindedness, his dislike for play, his strongly ambivalent relation to





mother and his unhappiness and anxiety—all point to the need of a thoroughgoing therapeutic. For him it will be not only a curative measure but even more than that, a prophylactic work to save him from sliding down into a mental disease probably one of a quite grave nature.

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## CHAPTER VII

### A FEW TYPES OF LYING IN CHILDREN \*

As we attempt an investigation into children's lying, a broad division at once attracts our notice. It is well known that children enjoy a rich phantasy life and some of their lying relates to their phantasy. In other cases lying is resorted to by children in order to avoid punishment. We shall first of all consider lying which is closely associated with children's phantasy.

As children wish to be big and strong like adults, they dream of power and of great achievements. We only regard such phantasies as lyings of different degrees when they are expressed by children either with a belief in their reality or to induce in others such a belief.

Dipak, a boy of six, said, as he saw the examiner writing with a pen, that he had fifty golden nibs. He even magnanimously offered a few of them to the examiner.

Dinu is a boy of eight. He is fairly strong and brave. Yet, as is quite natural, he is not equal to Neil, a boy of fifteen, either in strength or in athletic prowess. He is conscious of Neil's superiority and he never tries his strength with the latter. But as he is unable to resign himself to that humiliating truth he goes on saying to his friend that he is a match for Neil at football and he is also equal to him in physical strength.

Both the assertions may be regarded, for practical purposes, as falsehoods. The second one is only a more clever piece of lie as a contest which can disprove that it has not taken place.

The two instances of lying again probably characterise two different age-levels. A boy of ten has greater respect

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for fact than a boy of five. That is why his phantasy is more realistic and open contradiction of facts is much less common.

One of the potent sources of phantasy is the sense of inferiority and inadequacy experienced by children. Children entertain a number of important adultlike wishes but because of the immaturity of their power, they are unable to gratify them. As a result, they seek compensation in phantasy. Our question however is, why in certain cases children try to pass those wish-products for facts. It does not seem possible to provide a general answer to the question. Our attempt to answer that question may claim some validity in so far as those two cases go. It is sometimes said that children do not distinguish a fancy from a fact. Such a statement is rarely confirmed in fact. What is true, however, with very young children is that they little realize the ethical implication of truth and falsehood. Whenever Satu a boy of 3 years wishes to enjoy his midday meal he comes and says to his mother that he has taken his bath. He knows through repeated experience that the midday meal follows bath. He is not, however, ashamed of his untruth, though he knows the falsity of the statement. As educationists view the problem, it may be said that so long as a child does not realize the ethical implication of falsehood, the falsehood falls short of a lie.\*

Dipak is the younger of the two children of his parents. He is preceded by a sister who is senior by five years. It has been the lot of Dipak to be compared unfavourably with his sister quite frequently. Parents have further immoderately stirred the ambition of the child which remains true also in the case of Dinu. As a result both the children suffer from an exaggerated sense of inferiority which they feel to be very distressing. The simple make-believe in superiority does not suffice to sustain them against the inferiority feeling. They therefore try to assure themselves

\* That explains why no wise educationist would take a serious view of Satu's untruth nor the former will make any particular effort to correct the child. The educationist must wait for the moral sense to develop.





and others that they are not make-believes. In the case of Dipak the delusional character of the phantasy was apparent.

The lie of Parul, a girl five years of age, reveals some of the deeper causes in lying. She came to school accompanied by her two older sisters—Uma and Bina, who were seven and nine years of age respectively. Both the girls are taller than Parul. I made Parul and Uma stand side by side and then I asked Parul, "who is taller—you or Uma?" She immediately replied that she was the taller girl. Next she was compared to Bina in a similar manner and her answer to our question was again the same. I then came forward, stood by her side and asked, "who is the taller of us"? She said a little tenderly, "You are taller."

The mental age of Parul is 5 years and 3 months. We do not think her mistake to be an intellectual one. In all cases she knew that she was the shorter girl. But she hated her sisters and towards them she therefore displayed a keen sense of rivalry. In scholastic work the rivalry was quite marked. She must read books that others read and often she, in her wish to compete, reads too much. It was quite natural that Parul could not admit her shortness when she was compared with her rivals. But with the author, the matter was different. She all along displayed a lively wish to be loved by the author and she intuitively felt that if she was small, she would be loved all the more. The instance thus shows that the child's phantasy of tallness and wish to avoid truth derive the important part of their energy from her great hatred against her sisters.

An instance of fantastic lie of Dinu is given below : as Dinu went to the bath-room to wash himself, he found a small sparrow springing into existence from air. Gradually the sparrow became as big as a giant and as high as a three-storied building. As the giant wanted to catch hold of Dinu, he ran away and narrowly escaped. He narrated the story to his eight-year old friend, Kali, as the latter says, to frighten him. Kali was no doubt right in believing so, but as we understand, Dinu wanted Kali to share his fear and thus, to some extent relieve it. The phantasy seems to





portray symbolically a sexual theme. Quite possibly the giant represents the erected phallus of the father which, because of the presence of a masochistic passive homosexual wish in the child, seems to threaten him homosexuality in his mind. In other words, the phantasy contains a core of psychic reality which receives a disguised expression in a ghost story.

In reply to a question "who is the favourite child of your mother"? Naru, a child of eight writes "myself." We however know, so does the child, that the mother's favourite is his youngest brother. The child feels the truth as humiliating and he lies so that he may not appear inferior in the eyes of the examiner. It is quite likely that as the child also finds the facts very painful, he tries to forget it by believing that it is he, who is favourite. In that case the child tries to deceive himself as he deceives the examiner. Such an attempt at deception draws an important part of its motive from the child's wishful tendency.

It has been found that cultural tradition of the family is important in determining the quantity of a child's truthfulness. Children imitate their parents and when parents often lie, it cannot be expected that children will be very truthful. Imitativeness in children is not however an indiscriminate process and it is not sufficient to explain a child's untruthfulness by pointing out similar untruthfulness in parents. The affective relation between parents and children is always more important and it is to be taken fully into account to understand the child's untruthfulness. A child sometimes lies as his reaction to the father's lie not because of the child's tendency to imitate but as his gesture of revenge against the lying father.

Lying to avoid punishment forms the more intelligible group and it is also probably more important from the point of view of moral education. Akshaya has come to class without preparing his lessons. He escapes punishment by inventing an excuse *viz.*, that his mother's illness kept him busy at home. Such lying is prompted by fear, in the last instance, fear of punishment at the hand of the teacher.





Gradually the super-ego of the child develops, when it becomes necessary not only to deceive the external authority but also the internal authority to escape the pang of conscience. An older child's attempt to deceive others therefore more and more takes the character of self-deception.

A closely related variety of lying may often be found in children's quarrels. Each of the two fighting children tries to derive moral support from a belief that he has been aggressed first. Both of them try to enlist by that means the favourable judgment and support of the elders. Thus lying there is both a defence and an attack. Such lying, to an important degree, makes use of the mechanism of 'projection of guilt.' It may be said when Hari beats Jadu believing him an heir to the former's guilt, Jadu has been made in the mind of Hari to stand for Hari, or more accurately Hari's Id.

In connection with our investigation into the problem of anti-social behaviour in children we came across many cases of lying. One of them was referred to us by the Headmaster of a school as being an extreme case. We were given to believe that he would lie in all his answers to our questions. What we however found was that he lied with discrimination, whenever he sensed danger. For instance, to our question "what do you usually do in the afternoon"? He replied, "I go home, wash myself, take my tiffin, walk as far as Victoria Memorial, come back home before dusk and attend to my studies." In other words he does what his parents think he ought to do. He however really pursues none of the aforesaid acts of good conduct, and such failure on his part repeatedly met with reproof and punishment in the past. The last fact explains the reason for his lying. The boy however distinguished himself from other children in his almost entire lack of hesitancy and timidity when he lied. Moreover he has developed the art of self-consistent lying. It is difficult to find points for attack in such lies, yet such lying is not unintelligible.

No child has been found to lie on all points. We have however found even some of the very young children to be





consistently truthful. Every child, we believe, feels early in his life a spontaneous urge to speak the truth and to avoid a lie.\* They however sometimes do not choose to speak (especially to strangers) and sometimes they indulge in make-believe, none of which according to our definition, is untruth. Lying is a psychic hiding prompted mostly by the unpleasantness of the truth or fear of its consequences. If we want our children to be truthful, we must try to remove the sting from truth. If we cannot make truth always pleasant, we shall do well to make it appear less unpleasant and less fearful in the eyes of our children.

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\* We do not here refer to the ideal of truthfulness. The ideal is a later acquisition which most probably arises to counteract an already grown tendency to avoid truth.





## CHAPTER VIII

### A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF A TWO-YEAR OLD \*

Satu is a boy of 2 years and 9 months. We note below a few interesting facts of the child's mental development from a systematic record kept about him. The record covers a period more than 2 years since the child was six months of age. The child's mental history from the age of one year and six months has received, however, greater attention.

Satu belongs to a middle class family and of two sons of his parents he is the younger by five years. Both of his parents are teachers, the father works in a college while the mother works in a school. During the working hours, the children are left more often to the care of their grandmother.

Satu enjoys a fairly good health though worm causes him some trouble. At the age of 2 years and 6 months, he attained a fairly good control over his bowels and urines. He is an extrovert child and he seems to possess all the 'sthenic' emotion in abundance. He appears also to be precocious both intellectually and emotionally.

Satu at the age of 6 months showed both power and eagerness to seize things with his hands. He could then crawl and frequently used his crawling to seize objects.

He did not however have all that he wanted. The frustration occasionally led to a temporary regression to an earlier-acquired pleasure as the following incident would show. He had already developed interest in lighted lanterns and one day he was trying to get hold of one such. The lantern was however hung out of his reach high on the wall. He extended his hand and crawled some length to reach for it

\* First published in Indian Journal of Psychology, 1945, Vol. XX.



for sometime but without any success. In despair the child put his thumb into his mouth and began to suck.

Similar behaviour on the part of the child was observed in other connections. When his mother went out leaving him at home, he would react first with whining and crying. The child would seem to feel overwhelmed for a time, but then quite suddenly he would begin to suck his thumb and become quiet. The child's behaviour may remind one that in the lives of some persons, the difficulties encountered in living the life of object-libido leads to compensatory auto-erotic practices.

Satu reached his period of dentition at the 7th month. His gums were hard and oral sadism was marked. He bit whatever he could reach to, *e.g.*, finger, bread, chair, perambulator and books. His destructive urge was not confined to teeth only. He used his hands to tear newspapers whenever he got them. It seemed that the act of destruction gave him pleasure as well as caused him anxiety. He made however an exception in the case of brightly coloured objects, especially red ones. He watched such objects and would not sometimes proceed any further. May we say that here are marks of emergence of an aesthetic feeling distinguished by a rudimentary contemplative attitude which is different from the child's more usual active and aggressive incorporation of objects!

During this period, the mother had to keep away from home also during afternoon hours. The baby had adjusted himself well to the 6 hours' absence of his mother. To these additional hours of separation from the mother during afternoon, he now however failed to adjust himself. He began to cry unceasingly for the mother as soon as the clock struck five. The child evidently began to suffer from a sense of insecurity. The play of the child suffered also a set-back principally in diminution of the play-time. As the mother (the frustration mentioned was imposed for about ten days) discontinued her afternoon-outings, he however, gradually quieted down.





Satu at the age of 1 year 3 months was yet mostly elder-minded. He however developed some interest in his elder brother which was predominantly a hate-interest. He must have everything of the older child and eat whatever the latter would eat. The play things of the brother appeared of more value in his eyes which he readily took possession of and refused to part with.

He wanted the exclusive possession of his mother and whatever threatened his possession evoked his anger. He felt particularly jealous of his father and the elder brother and the jealousy persists till now. He did not seem to like his parents talking to each other and he did not seem to tolerate any physical contact between them. He would also say that she was Satu's mother and not the mother of his elder brother.

Satu began to show at this time a lot of interest in shoes. The bigger shoes made on him a greater appeal than his own small pair.\* In this respect, we believe, he is like other children. He was again most zealous to possess the shoes of the brother and seemed to be unwilling to countenance the fact that his brother had any need of shoes.

One day his elder brother was eating sugar from a plate while Satu had another plate. Satu was dissatisfied with his own plate and aggressively got hold of his elder brother's. The child's preference for things belonging to his elder brother to those of his own is quite a trait in the child's character.

This trait we think is more due to an inner dissatisfaction with himself, than to lack of development of intelligence. The child's envy is based on the fact of his inferiority. He proudly co-operates with his brother when he feels that he is his equal and can do what his brother

\* Foot and shoe are well-known sexual symbols standing for penis and vagina. It is not an accident why the inheriting of the father's property by the death of the father is expressed by the expression "stepping into the father's shoes." It means in the unconscious the acquisition of all the powers and privileges of the father, including the sexual one.





can do. He (age 1 year and 3 months) repeatedly exchanged a pump with his brother and played with it as he could use the pump almost equally well. He reacted to the hammer however quite differently. As he was unable to handle it satisfactorily while his brother showed some proficiency with respect to it, he summarily took the exclusive possession of the hammer only with the motive of dispossessing his brother of it. It seemed to be unbearable for him to see that the brother succeeded while he could not.

It is striking to note that power to enjoy and greed for exclusive possession hold an inverse relation. Quite often the lack of power evoked hostile emotion and Satu took pleasure in destroying the houses, his brother made with wooden blocks and bricks. In fact, so long as he was unable to build a house himself, he could be prevented from destroying the building of his brother only with great difficulty. The destructive act probably draws its motive from two sources: Firstly, the greater craftsmanship of the elder brother humiliates and angers the child; secondly, the act of destruction gives him an added sense of power.

About this time Satu developed the habit of throwing away things. He disliked the maid-servant in whose care he was sometimes left. When she approached him, he made a movement of expulsion by hand and uttered the word, "Ta, Ta" (go away, go away). Throwing away of objects constituted most of his play. One day (1 year 3 months) he picked up a pencil *only to throw it away again*. He made the parents pick it up for him so that he could throw it away again.

Satu's jealousy, throwing away of objects and unhappiness as expressed by frequent cryings reached their peak when he was two years of age. He then occasionally threw objects at his brother. When he was angry, he would urinate\* sometimes. Urination has been known in

\* Urination is a matter of shame for adults as much as other known sexual manifestations. Shame represents repressed sexuality. Evidences of one's intimate life and a little introspection would show to most men the sexual meaning the act of urinating bears.





psycho-analysis to have destructive significance in the child. When Satu however used a pot to urinate, he probably gratified sexual impulse more than the aggressive one.

The child showed that he was unable to adjust himself satisfactorily to the presence of a third person, especially his brother, in the proximity of his mother. He was angry and miserable and made the life of his mother also equally miserable. When he was alone with his mother he was however happy. Though he disliked the brother most in the presence of his mother, he showed some liking for him when the two were left alone.

Satu's aggressiveness showed some decrease when he was 2 years and 6 months. At 2 years 9 months he seems to have been socialised to some degree. He is at least able to inhibit some of the more primitive expressions of aggression—as throwing an object and striking.\*

He also displayed during this period some attempts at self-injury. He appeared careless† and even reckless in his movements and actions. He bumped himself against the wall, often fell down and hurt himself. In this respect he was quite opposite of his brother in whom the destructiveness was not much developed. Satu's self-directed aggression attained indubitable expression, when one day at the age of 1 year 3 months he accidentally hurt his head against the almirah. He became enraged and he struck his head again and again against the almirah.

\* Children's relations with each other are determined more by hate than by love. This maxim applies most to children between eighteen months and thirty months of age. Whatever love children are capable of, grow out of familiarity and of playing together. A child meeting another for the first time is apt most often to treat him with hatred. Satu was met by a three year old in the park. The visitor looked at Satu for sometime and then viciously opined, "The policeman would catch this boy." After an hour another boy came—he was an eight year old child—he struck Satu as the latter was playing for mere fun. Dinu, another boy of just 2 years of age is altogether uninhibited in aggressive behaviour. He meets a stranger child with open violence and often does not spare even his acquaintances.

† Psycho-analysis of children enables Melanie Klein to discover that children so often "accidentally" hurt themselves because they wish it.





Recently as he fell down on the floor, he said to himself that he had deserved being hurt ("well-deserved"). The expression, "well-deserved," he had taken over from his father who used it, in anger, on a few occasions when the child had carelessly fallen down and hurt himself. We may believe that the child identified himself with his father in condemning himself as he was already feeling "an unconscious need of punishment."

At one year six months of age Satu regarded all illness and calamities as somebody's aggression. When he found a boil on the hand of his father, he immediately asked his father—"who has beaten you?"

In respect of his brother's illness also—that was a case of fever—he made a similar enquiry.

Satu displayed anxiety, which often assumed a phobic character. It was found to bear a direct relationship to his aggression.

From his early months, the duration of the child's sleep fell short of what was normal for a baby of his age. At 1 year of age, he slept for about ten hours or so. He appeared also restless in his sleep. Sometimes he cried in his dreams. One night, when he was two years and one month of age (this was the period when the child's aggression reached its highest), he was awakened from his sleep by a dream and began crying, "brother has taken away my shoes." On the day preceding the dream, each brother had got a gift of a new pair of shoes. Satu tried immediately to monopolise not only his pair, but also the pair which belonged to his brother. He was found to put on the bigger pair and to walk about, to the dismay of the older child. That incident makes the dream intelligible. He was being punished by his brother; he had robbed the brother of his big shoes, but in the dream the brother was robbing him of his small pair. The relation between the child's aggression and his anxiety is also evident from another incident. Satu used to beat a cat cruelly. During daytime, he showed little fear of the cat but when it was





dark he was all fear lest the cat would come and bite him.\* The fear of attacks came mostly to him when he sat for his evening meals. He feared that the cat would come from underneath the table and bite his leg. He however showed little fear of his pet—a kitten—whom he caressed and fed. His fear of the cat had somewhat abated when he was persuaded to feed the animal. He was afraid of Dinu—an aggressive boy of 2 years age—with whom he made his acquaintance about two months ago. In fact he ran to his parents as soon as he caught sight of Dinu. One afternoon Dinu was given something to eat by Satu's mother. Satu watched it and said to Dinu, "Dinu, you will not beat me any more."

He also showed fear of attack when he evacuated faeces. The evacuation of faeces is, in the mind of the child, an aggressive act. That perhaps explains why the act is associated with anxiety.

One night at this time Satu dreamt a rather pleasant dream in which he saw Dinu flying away. Satu has been found to try to allay his own anxiety regarding animals by saying "I shall give the animals rice and fish to eat. The animals would love me."

Quite recently the child has developed a phobia that the dog would bite him and the fear was occasioned mostly by the loud barking. The child has for some months been showing fear of loud sounds. It may not be irrelevant to note here that Satu greatly fears his father's loud scolding and it may be suggested on the evidence of other psycho-analytic findings, that the dog represents the father in the Unconscious of the boy.

Satu often anxiously guards his possessions and betrays an ever present fear of being robbed. This fear according to our opinion arises largely from the child's utter lack of respect for other's property.†

\* Dinu of whom mention had already been made showed a similar behaviour. He was often at night afraid of animals whom he aggressed during day.

† That fear expressed itself in his dream when recently he dreamt and cried "Bina has robbed me." Bina is a child of about four years age. In their mutual relations, Satu is more often the aggressor and the robber.





To explain Satu's phobia of animals we may suppose that he has set up within him a sadistic super-ego, the picture of his punishing and prohibiting parent, reinforced by his own aggression. He projects his super-ego on to the animals and regards them more dangerous than they actually are. In his case the transfer of fear from the father to the animal was probably facilitated by a game which he used to play in which the father assumed the role of a tiger, and more often, a barking dog. Now as the dog has been made to stand for hostile father, he is to some extent relieved from fearing the real father so greatly. He has made quite a useful division in his psyche between the bad father (dog) and the good father (father) and he shows therefore an intelligible unwillingness to see his real father assuming any more the role of the dog. In fact he has developed quite an aversion to the game in which the father took the dog's part. More or less, in the language of Melanie Klein, one may say that when he thus runs to father for shelter, he really seeks reassurance from good father against his internalised bad father as represented by the dog.

Recently educators have stressed the importance of catharsis of affect as a measure of mental hygiene. The usefulness of catharsis *e.g.*, of aggression, is based on the knowledge gained by psycho-analysis that "the more a man controls his aggressiveness, the more intense become the aggressive tendencies of his ego-ideal against his ego. It is a displacement, turning round upon the self." (Sigmund Freud<sup>2</sup>). In the above-mentioned facts of Satu, we however notice an important limitation in the usefulness of catharsis. Psycho-analysis has again long ago informed us that there is in our Unconscious an innate belief in the talion law. The child's release of aggression in aggressive actions leads to the development of anxiety in the child.

For some time past he has been found to show visible signs of anxiety at his acts of aggression. This anxiety he tried to overcome by acts of mending and replacement. Shops in this connection played an important part in his psyche as they provided a means of replacement. A few





days ago, he broke his cup and seemed anxious. He was told by his father that a new cup would be bought for him from the shop. He repeated the father's words again and again and seemed less anxious. He was on the next day taken to a shop and a cup was bought for him. He was extremely glad. Whenever a toy breaks, he makes his mother mend that for him.

Satu was not allowed to touch his father's pen and inkpot. In the absence of his parents he sometimes made use of them as his fancy dictated. Gradually he acquired some control over his wishes and one day when he was two years and one month of age, he sat down on the father's chair, watched the pen and the inkpot and gravely remarked: "the father beats me for taking the pen." We may suppose that as he experienced the desire, the associated parental prohibition came to his mind and he verbalised the same to dissuade himself from the temptation.

Satu began to practise thumb-sucking quite vigorously and enormously from his nine months of age when he was weaned from the mother's breast and the habit in such a form persisted for about three months. He began to show interest in his penis when he was one year and eight months of age. The penis seemed to be a matter of pride for him. He sometimes drew the prepuce upward and noticed curiously the red glanspenis. Sometimes he masturbated (drawing forward and backward for about four or five times in all). He developed interest in his brother's penis too, which he tried to handle whenever his brother was naked and showed curiosities about the penis of both his father and his mother. He believed that everyone possessed a penis. Quite recently his genital interest has lessened both as regards curiosity and manipulation. Satu was often found to caress his mother. He kissed her and embraced her. He was sometimes found to caress his elder brother too and would ask him to suck his breast. He thereby played the role of the mother. Sometimes he played the father and more often the doctor who came and



injected his mother. He thereby gratified his sadistic male wish by identification. In addition to such 'sympathetic' identification he also showed evidences of 'empathic' identification. He often anxiously enquired where were mothers of other men. Recently one day he was ill and was refused his usual food; when he saw the picture of a few men he said that the men must eat rice and curry. This was an instance of wish for gratification by proxy.

At two years of age he again showed many signs of castration anxiety. One day as he was putting on pants he anxiously enquired about his penis again and again. When at last he was shown his penis, he became relieved and said, "now let me put on the pants." During this period he developed an obsessional interest in the missing leg in persons and in picture. If legs did not appear visible to him, he was immediately found to enquire of their existence. If artists were not careful enough to draw both the legs, he would try to know in endless repetitions, where the other leg had gone. His parents' usual reply was, "The leg is there, but remains covered." This did not always allay his anxiety and sometimes he added a supplementary question if the leg had been taken away by a kite (bird). In that household it was a common fun of elders to tease the child by saying that the kite would take away the child's penis.

We believe that there is some important nexus between the child's various anxieties. Those developed most at the height of child's aggression. Then again the child's fear of being bitten by a dog\* assumed much greater proportion when the castration anxiety in its almost undisguised form became more and more unconscious. We may think that the former fear owes its present intensity to the reinforcement from the latter.

Satu's fear of animals is the ego's fear of the super-ego. Recently one day we have found him saying to cows, "cow,

\* He is not now immune from the phobia even during daytime. His attitude towards cats when he was two years of age alternated between attraction and repulsion. But only dogs are at present objects of great fear.





come and bite me." Thus ego both wishes and fears super-ego's chastisement. About a month ago, the child got a fright as a cow rushed at him.

Satu shows a few more signs of oral fixation to the mother's breast. We found him the other day playing with his genital. Suddenly he asked: "where is the mother's breast"? That showed that he was still dominated by the infantile interest in the mother's breast which led him to identify penis with nipple. This may be understood as a mild fixation to oral libido. It is probable that in an extreme case of oral fixation the child shows an entire unwillingness to develop any new interest. In a moderate type, though the child develops new interests, the new series derive the important part of their (unconscious) significance from the old one for which they stand mostly as substitutes.\* The intimate knowledge of Satu's history revealed that Satu's oral interest was unduly strong. The attempt at weaning the child at nine months of age miscarried as the child was found to be extremely miserable and restless as a result of the imposed frustration.

Satu has retained an important part of his oral libido by transferring it to cigarettes and oranges. He shows insatiable greed for oranges and he goes on eating them one, two, three, four, and even five, while his interest in other food may be regarded as normal for a child. Oranges may be a good substitute for nipple for it is juicy (juice-milk) and it satisfies to some extent sucking interest. He often makes cigarettes in his play and 'smokes' them. Every-day he comes and turns the pages of the newspaper to see his favourite picture of cigarettes. He sometimes shows wish to be milked like a cow. He saw milking of cows. His penis, he offers, for udder. We thus see that for the

\* It is interesting to observe that in the phenomenon of regression conditioned by castration anxiety, the reverse holds good. Alexander<sup>3</sup> writes that oral and anal forms of satisfaction do not become freed of castration anxiety "because the pregenital gratifications themselves have acquired a genital character." A gentleman told us that he experiences his "oral" excitement in his oral and genital regions. It is not however a case of thoroughgoing inversion.





child everything has become a symbol for nipple. He is like a mechanic who sees everywhere his favourite machine.

In the identification of nipple with other objects there are mainly two varieties: In the one, he takes the role of the baby; in the other, he identifies himself with the mother and introjects the nipple into himself.

We shall conclude our paper by pointing out that the second year was an extremely important as well as a critical period in the life of Satu. Many of his infantile habits and emotions reached then their height. At that period he showed great interest in his penis and urinary activity, demonstrated great jealousy, aggression and some love as well as suffered from morbid fears and castration anxiety. It may be added that the emotions and experiences of Satu's third year would prove to be of decisive significance for the subsequent course of his life.

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3. Franz Alexander—*The Psycho-Analysis of the Total Personality*, p. 105.





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